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Theophilus Cranfield

THE
USEFUL CHRISTIAN:

A MEMOIR

OF

THOMAS CRANFIELD,

FOR ABOUT FIFTY YEARS A DEVOTED SUNDAY-SCHOOL
TEACHER.

"Poor, yet making many rich."—2 Cor. vi. 10.

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MEMOIR

OF

THOMAS CRANFIELD.

CHAPTER I.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS MARRIAGE.

THOMAS CRANFIELD, the subject of this memoir was born near London, on the 12th March, 1758. He was the only son of Thomas Cranfield, a journeyman baker, at that time totally unlettered, and ignorant of the great truths of Christianity, although outwardly moral. His mother was able to read pretty fluently, and this was then considered no ordinary acquisition for a woman in her sphere of life.

His father had but two children—a son and a daughter; and being sensible of the disadvantages under which he laboured from the want of proper education, he was resolved that they should receive the benefit of early instruction. Accordingly, at seven years of age, Thomas was sent to a parochial school, and continued there until he was fourteen. He was, however, averse to instruction and impatient of control; and being naturally of

a fiery temper, he could ill brook the discipline and restraint necessary for a well-regulated school. he therefore frequently absented himself, without the knowledge of his parents, for two or three successive weeks. For these offences he was severely punished, both by his master and father, without effect. As he grew older, his aversion to books became still more manifest. He was generally last in his class, while in fights and contentions he was always foremost. Many were the pugilistic encounters which took place among his schoolfellows through his influence; and often has he induced them to sally out, in a body, for the purpose of attacking the scholars of a neighbouring school.

At this time he was addicted to the most vicious habits. In a letter to a friend, written shortly before his decease, he states—"I can say, with Mr. Whitefield, that I was froward from my birth. I was so brutish as to hate instruction, and shun all opportunities of receiving it. I can date very early acts of lying, filthy talking, and foolish jesting. I used to curse and swear, break the Sabbath, and steal money out of my mother's pocket. Indeed, it would be impossible to mention all the sins and offences of my younger days; my heart would fail me in this recital, were I not assured that Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for me."

He was likewise very cruel in his disposition, especially towards the brute creation. To torment horses, sheep, and pigs; to hang cats and dogs; and to wring the necks of ducks, fowls, sparrows, &c., afforded him merriment and delight. His father's cellar was his slaughter-house, where many such revolting scenes were exhibited. In

deed, one day, he hung, in sport, one of his play-fellows, and but for the interference of a labouring man, who providentially came to the spot at that juncture, and saw the lad suspended by the neck, he would have been strangled. At another time, merely from a love of mischief, he set fire to his father's house ; but as it happened in the day time, the flames were extinguished before they occasioned much damage.

In his youth, he experienced some remarkable instances of providential deliverance. Once he fell into a deep muddy ditch, from which he was extricated with much difficulty, and apparently lifeless. At another time, when crossing the river in a boat, he fell overboard, but was picked up by a fisherman.

None of these things, however, suitably affected him. He grew more hardened in sin, and manifested a still stronger hatred to every thing like instruction. The consequence was, that, when removed from school, he was scarcely able to read the New Testament, and could write but very indifferently.

On attaining his fourteenth year, his father apprenticed him to Mr. Poole, a respectable tailor in London, who took great interest in his youthful charge, and laboured to the utmost of his power to promote his moral and spiritual improvement. He took him twice every Sabbath to a place of worship ; but the service to him was so extremely wearisome, that he often endeavoured, though in vain, to prevail on his master to excuse his attendance.

Fifteen months passed away in this manner, during which time he had made considerable pro-

gress, not only in his business, but also in reading and writing ; but being weary of restraint, he resolved to leave his master's house, and an accident soon occurred which induced him to put his design into execution. His master had a favourite bird, and Thomas was ordered to clean out its cage. In an unguarded moment, the door of its prison was left open, and the bird quickly made his escape. For this negligence the youth was threatened with punishment ; and being predetermined to abscond from his situation, he thought this the most fitting opportunity ; therefore, immediately packing up his clothes, and a few other articles, he left his home and travelled towards St. Alban's, where he arrived the same evening. At a lodging-house in this place he found an asylum for the night, for which he paid two-pence. He arose early the next morning, and set forward towards Northampton, a distance of about forty-five miles from St. Alban's, and reached that town in the evening of the same day. Notwithstanding the fatigue occasioned by so long a journey, the following morning found him on his way to Coventry ; and here his scanty stock of money being exhausted, he sold his new suit of clothes for half a guinea. At this city he rested one day, and then pushed forward to Birmingham, where he hoped to obtain employment.

Mr. Poole, his master, upon hearing that his apprentice had absconded, immediately made the circumstance known to his parents, who sent in all directions to ascertain the place of his concealment, not doubting that he was somewhere about town ; but after fruitlessly searching for him many days, they gave up all hopes of ever seeing him again, believing that he was drowned.

Though the design of young Cranfield in thus absconding from his situation was merely to free himself from the restraints of his master, yet this incident was wonderfully overruled by Providence for the good of the youth, as well as the honour and credit of his industrious parents, for thereby a criminal connexion was broken off, which would, in all probability, have brought him to ruin.

Upon his arrival at Birmingham, not knowing any person to whom he could apply for assistance, he proceeded to the market-place, and endeavoured to excite a feeling of interest in the minds of the butchers and others, by representing himself as an orphan. In the day-time he would stand in the market-place for hire, and at night would take up his quarters beneath the butchers' stalls. Work becoming scarce, and being reduced to great necessity, he submitted to the meanest employments, such as following coal-carts, assisting to carry the coals into purchasers' houses, and picking up various articles in the streets for sale. He now began to repent of his rash and disobedient conduct, and, like the prodigal, turned his thoughts to his father's house, where there was "bread enough and to spare;" but a sense of shame, and want of means, prevented him from adopting the resolution of arising and returning home.

All his endeavours to procure proper subsistence failed; and being pressed hard by hunger, he was induced, as his last resource, to sell his Bible, which he prized, as being the gift of his mother. At length, however, he procured employment at a tailor's, for whom he agreed to work merely for his food. But here he was half-starved. His new master, being an intemperate man, had but little

money for necessaries, and poor Thomas often retired to rest at night without having tasted any food since the morning.

His distress was increased by the circumstance of his master having a favourite dog, with which he was obliged to share his meals. This dog's name was "Bob;" and his master often stood over his servant, while the scanty provision was divided, and then compelled him to toss a penny with Bob to see which should have the best share.

Finding it impossible to continue in his situation under such circumstances, he endeavoured to procure another master; and at length finding a tailor who wanted an apprentice, he consented to bind himself to him for seven years. Here, however, he still had to contend with great hardships: his master was extremely severe and unmerciful, and frequently compelled him to work from four o'clock in the morning till eleven or twelve at night for many days together; while he was but badly clothed and fed, and never allowed a single penny for pocket-money. Upon the slightest offence, and sometimes for no offence at all, he was horse-whipped in the most severe and degrading manner, although he strove to the utmost of his power to serve his master.

Notwithstanding the cruel treatment he here experienced, he continued in this situation for upwards of three years, when, having made considerable progress in his business, and being able to complete a garment tolerably well, he resolved to leave his tyrannical master, and endeavour to gain a subsistence by doing small jobs at the houses of private individuals. Watching his opportunity, therefore, he secretly left Birmingham, and pro-

ceeded to Bridgenorth. Here he continued but a short time; for finding it extremely difficult to obtain employment, and being again reduced to great necessities, he resolved to return to London, and submit himself to his old master during the proper term of his apprenticeship. With this determination, he left Bridgenorth in August, 1777, and was on his road to Worcester, when he met with a recruiting party belonging to the 39th regiment of foot, and was by them induced to enlist into the king's service.

As soon as young Cranfield had joined the regiment, he was marched forward to Wolverhampton; and there ascertaining that he was shortly to leave England and embark for Gibraltar, he began to reflect seriously upon his situation. He thought of home, his sister, his parents, his old master and mistress, all of whom were endeared to him by the recollection of their constant, though fruitless, endeavours to promote his happiness and improvement. The ingratitude he had shown, and the rebellious and undutiful conduct he had manifested towards those who had been solicitous only for his welfare, stung him with the most bitter anguish. All that filial affection, for which he was afterwards remarkable, now seemed to manifest itself, and he resolved to write to his parents, expressing his contrition for his disobedience, begging their forgiveness, and informing them of his present situation. He reflected that he was now about to leave his native country, and, in all probability, should never more return to it: and the thought of not again seeing those whom he loved, and whom he had so deeply injured, distressed him exceedingly, and induced him to make every in-

quiry as to the practicability of his going to London previous to his embarkation for a foreign shore. It was, therefore, with the greatest delight that he received the information of his general then being in town, and the probability there was of the regiment being ordered shortly to join him there. He accordingly wrote to his father to the foregoing effect, and shortly afterwards received from him a kind and affectionate letter in reply.

It was just previous to this incident that his father, strolling one Sabbath along the streets of London, came near to a church, just as several of the congregation were entering. Prompted by curiosity, he went in with the crowd. The word, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was brought powerfully home to his mind; so that he became convinced of sin, and of the necessity of salvation through the Redeemer. He soon began to feel the value of the Bible; and viewing it as a mine in which were hid rich and inexhaustible treasures, he felt an unconquerable desire to explore it for himself, he therefore sat down, at the age of forty-two, to learn his letters, and in a short space of time was enabled, by the assistance of his wife, to read with considerable fluency. Being now instructed by the wisest of all teachers, he became qualified to give his son the very best advice; and upon the receipt of his letter he wrote suitably to him, which was a great comfort to his mind.

The hopes he entertained of seeing his parents before he left England, were not, however, realized, as the regiment was ordered to take a different route from that which was at first intended. On the 29th of September he left Wolverhampton,

and marched direct for Portsmouth. The weather was bad, and the road worse, so that he experienced much inconvenience and fatigue. On his arrival at Portsmouth, he was ordered to go on board the merchant ship *Mary*, where he wrote another letter to his parents, designating himself heir "undutiful son." In a few days after the date of this letter, his regiment was shifted on board a man-of-war bound for Gibraltar; and on arriving there, he wrote the following letter to his father:—

"Gibraltar, 30th Nov. 1777.

"HONOURED FATHER,

"I received your letter dated Oct. 29th, and was glad to hear that you were all well. You may imagine it was no small disappointment to me that I was not able to see you; but we must submit to the will of Providence without repining. I trust, however, we shall yet meet again—if not in this world, God grant that we may meet again in the world to come, and spend a joyful eternity together. We had a very bad passage to Gibraltar: the name of the ship was the *Exeter*, 64 guns: we were four weeks on our voyage, and landed on the 10th November. I am in want of nothing at present, and meet with very good friends, who give me good advice."

As soon as he was settled in his new quarters, Cranfield commenced his military training, in which he made rapid progress, although he found it to be galling work. His high spirit and quick temper could scarcely be kept within due bounds, especially when he received from the drill-sergeant a smart tap, on his shoulder or on his toes, for not

keeping himself in a proper position. Upon one of these occasions he raised his musket, and threatened to knock his officer down ; for which offence he was severely reprimanded.

As he could read and write tolerably well, he was esteemed in the regiment as an excellent scholar. He likewise became a great favourite with his commanding officer, being courageous, industrious, clean in his person, and attentive to orders : so soon, therefore, as he became master of his exercise, his regular duties as a private were discontinued ; and he was employed in making clothes for the regiment, which added much to his income.

From this period, nothing of particular importance occurred till the summer of 1779, when the Spaniards laid siege to Gibraltar.

The town and fortress of Gibraltar stand upon a rocky eminence in Andalusia, the most southern province of Spain. The rock, which is connected with the continent by an isthmus of low sand, and almost wholly surrounded by the waters of the Mediterranean, forms a promontory three miles in length from north to south. On this isthmus the Spaniards encamped in the month of June, to the number of 20,000 men ; while the garrison was defended by less than 6000. All communication was cut off from the continent, and Spanish armed vessels and gun-boats sailed in all directions, to prevent any supplies being furnished on the sea-side. Intrenchments were industriously formed, and batteries raised to bombard the fortress.

At the sight of the enemies of his country, his spirit was much excited, and, burning with the desire to be actively employed against them, he

requested his commanding officer to allow him to take his share in the duties and dangers of the private soldier, from which, by his employment, he was exempt.

It was not till the 12th of April, 1781, that the Spaniards opened their fire upon the town and fortress, when they poured in such a prodigious discharge of shot and shells from their forts, lines, and advanced works, as created among the inhabitants the greatest consternation and alarm. So terrible was the sight, that the oldest veteran in the regiment declared that he had never witnessed any thing equal to it. The shells fell in every direction, and to avoid the effects of their explosion, the soldiers were obliged continually to fall flat on their faces. His feelings on this first attack of the Spaniards, will be best described in his own words, which are extracted from a letter to a friend, written about twenty-two years after this event :—

“I shall never forget the day the Spaniards commenced firing. It was in the afternoon, and I was on duty at the southernmost part of the garrison. Never having heard the whistling of a cannon-shot before, I was filled with horror beyond expression. My old sins, and the roaring of the cannon, produced a very hell in my soul. My regiment lay in barracks in the town; I dreaded to go near them, but duty called, and I was compelled to obey. Paleness was in every face. I sat up that night to watch the shells. The town was soon in flames: and the inhabitants left their property, to seek shelter in caves of the rock. The soldiers, finding the place deserted, commenced a general search for spoil.”

The labour and fatigue which he now endured were excessive. He was obliged to be on guard for three or four successive days and nights; and then, within an hour after he retired to his quarters, the drum unexpectedly beat again to arms.

Cranfield was naturally kind and good-natured, and was consequently much beloved by his comrades. His willingness also to lend or read to them his Bible, which he had again procured before he left England, and which, as he understood, was the only one in the regiment, gained for him much of their esteem and regard. His general good conduct was likewise noticed by his colonel, who, in 1781, raised him to the rank of corporal, and intrusted him with several important commissions, which he executed with credit to himself and satisfaction to his officers.

To illustrate his natural temperament, it is mentioned that soon after his promotion, he was ordered to proceed with a few men to an eminence, for the purpose of erecting a small sand-battery, to flank one which had been raised by the enemy; who, perceiving their intentions, immediately levelled some guns at them in order to compel them to desist. The work, however, proceeded, though with great difficulty. Corporal Cranfield, finding the enemy's fire to be very severe, thought it advisable to suspend further operations, until he had communicated with his commanding officer. He mentioned his intention to one of his men, who replied, "Oh! hang it, Tom, never give in." "Well," said the corporal, "if that is your mind, we never will give in." Then redoubling their efforts, the work was at length finished, and on its completion Corporal Cranfield mounted the

battery amidst a shower of shot from the enemy and gave three cheers of exultation for the success of the undertaking.

This daring spirit frequently led him into dangers which he might otherwise have avoided. One fine summer's day, he took his fishing-rod, and coolly sat himself down on a projecting rock within the reach of the enemy's artillery, for the purpose of fishing. This so provoked the Spaniards, that a gun was pointed and fired at him; but the shot did no further execution than just splintering the rock above his head.

His care for the lives of the men placed under his command was truly praiseworthy. Though reckless of danger himself, he never would consent to expose the lives of others unnecessarily. Many have been saved through his instrumentality, not only from the shots of the enemy, but also from the rigour of military law.

The siege was still carried on with great vigour. Battery after battery was erected, and the preparations of the enemy began to assume a formidable aspect: but as fast as their works approached to a state of completion, the governor found means to destroy them, sometimes by the fire of the garrison, and once by sending out a detachment of men under cover of the night. On the latter occasion, which happened on the 27th of Nov. 1781, Mr. Cranfield was ordered to join the attacking party; and, although he usually entertained a thorough contempt of danger, his heart almost failed him on leaving the fortress. The moon, which had just before been shining with peculiar lustre, had now descended beneath the distant waters of the Atlantic, leaving the belligerents in a deep and uni-

versal shade. Orders were given that neither voice nor foot should be heard, and the whole detachment moved forward, through the various posts, towards the Spanish lines. Mr. Cranfield looked wistfully around him: all was dark and silent as the grave. His thoughts involuntarily reverted to the scenes of his youth; his past offences against his parents appeared to rise up, and place themselves in array before him. "What recompense have I made?" thought he. "None and I shall now never see my father and mother again." The tears had just begun to trickle down his manly cheeks, when a voice was heard in Spanish, demanding, "Who goes there?" In a moment all his gloomy thoughts were dissipated, every musket was levelled, and, without firing a single shot, the whole detachment pressed boldly forward, and, bearing down all opposition, the works they were ordered to destroy were carried in quick succession at the point of the bayonet.

The business of destruction now commenced: the workmen began with their warlike combustibles to set the batteries on fire, while the artillerymen spiked the mortars and cannon. In a few minutes the isthmus appeared one entire blaze. All this was accomplished in the short space of fifteen minutes: and the loss to the enemy was estimated at one million of dollars, besides a great number of officers and men.

Mr. C., in this hazardous enterprise, displayed uncommon ardour and alacrity; his zeal made him almost furious; and while the half-awakened Spaniards, totally unprepared for such an encounter, were falling before him, he cheered on his companions by shouting, "Skewer away, my

boys!" The carnage was awful among the Spaniards, as little quarter was given; some of the English also were killed, but he escaped unhurt, and returned in triumph with the detachment to the garrison.

In this encounter his life was exposed to the most imminent danger; but, instead of his heart being softened with gratitude for the deliverance he had experienced, it was only the more hardened.

In may reasonably be supposed, that in a siege so protracted, and carried on with such extraordinary vigour, the dangers to which this gallant soldier was exposed were great and many. On one occasion, when appointed to guard a magazine, which the enemy was desirous of destroying, the firing was so hot, that curiosity prompted him to reckon the number of shells that fell near him. To this circumstance he alludes in a letter to his parents, dated February 18th, 1782:—

“The Spaniards are renewing their advanced works with a ten-gun battery and two mortar batteries; but all in vain; we never were better prepared for them than we are at this time. Our works and fortifications are firm and strong, so that no Spaniard dare face us within musket-shot. They still hold on the siege with great vigour, and have now been firing upon us night and day for nearly eleven months. The like was never known in the memory of man, for they have thrown into the garrison, from land and sea, upwards of 15,000 shells, besides an incredible number of cannon-balls. I have actually counted, when upon guard, eighty shells in one hour.”

At times, after having been on guard for several

hours together, without receiving any injury, another, upon relieving him, has been instantly killed. Frequently, also, when overcome with fatigue, he has lain all night upon the open, wet ground, while the water from the heights has been running beneath him. Still his constitution remained uninjured. Besides all this, he was reduced, through scarcity, to a short allowance of provision, and very little could be bought among the inhabitants. Frequently he has been compelled by hunger to eat the flesh of cats and dogs; and even rats have at times afforded him a welcome repast. Bread at this time was selling in the town at the rate of five dollars a loaf, and even at that enormous price could with difficulty be procured. The baker was allowed to make only a certain quantity a day in loaves as small as penny cakes. At a given hour, a guard of soldiers was placed around the shop, when purchasers, having tied their money in a handkerchief, threw it in at a wicket which was opened for that purpose, and received in return their supply of bread. On these occasions a scene of indescribable confusion generally occurred, as several persons would claim the same handkerchief, and violently fight and scramble for its possession. Fresh meat was equally expensive: a small leg of mutton at one time sold for more than fifteen dollars; a goose for about the same sum; cheese and butter were a dollar and a quarter, and tea ten dollars per pound. The entrails of a pig or an ox were eagerly purchased at one dollar per pound. Vegetables were equally scarce and dear; and what were sometimes sold, were no better than refuse.

In the year 1782, the Spanish monarch having

accomplished the reduction of Minorca, turned his whole attention to the siege of Gibraltar. Duke De Crillon, the conqueror of Minorca, was appointed captain-general of the French and Spanish armies, which now amounted to forty thousand men; and these, together with forty-seven sail of the line, besides floating batteries, frigates, and other vessels of war, were employed for this great enterprise. Floating batteries were so constructed, that it was thought impossible for the besieged to sink or set fire to them. Their keels were fortified with an extraordinary thickness of timber; and the sides were lined with timber and cork, a long time soaked in water, with a large quantity of wet sand between. These vessels were thus constructed, in order that they might not be set on fire by red-hot balls from the garrison. But the most extraordinary part of their construction remains to be noticed. In imitation of the circulation of the blood in the living body, a great variety of pipes and canals perforated all the solid workmanship, in such a manner that a continual supply of water was to be conveyed to every part of the vessel, a number of pumps being in readiness for the purpose. By this means it was expected that the red-hot shot would remedy its own mischief, as the very action of cutting through those pipes would cause its immediate extinction. So that these terrible machines, teeming with every source of outward destruction, seemed to be themselves invulnerable, and entirely secure from all danger. In order to render these batteries bomb-proof, a hanging roof was erected, formed of netting, covered and protected by wet hides, of great strength and thickness. On board these batteries

were placed brass cannon of a large calibre, and in each ship a supply of guns was kept in case of accident. Besides these instruments of destruction, no less than twelve hundred pieces of heavy cannon were collected for the siege, and the quantity of gunpowder was said to exceed eighty-three thousand barrels! Scarcely a single person, except the English, thought it possible that the fortress could hold out twenty-four hours after the attack began.

About eight o'clock on the morning of the 13th September, 1782, the ten battering ships of the enemy weighed anchor, and stood over towards Gibraltar, where they occupied the place allotted for them—about nine hundred yards from the works. As soon as they had reached their stations, they began a heavy cannonade, in which they were seconded and supported by the cannon and mortars in the lines; while the batteries from the garrison opened with hot and cold shot from the guns, and with shells from the howitzers and mortars. It is impossible to conceive, much less to describe, the horrid grandeur of this scene. The prodigious showers of balls and bombs, which filled the air, and were without intermission thrown into every part of the garrison, seemed to render it impossible even for a bird to escape. Amidst this “confused noise of war, and garments rolled in blood,” Corporal Cranfield most gallantly maintained his post; he toiled incessantly all that morning; and about two o'clock in the afternoon he had the unspeakable satisfaction of observing that the battering-ship, which he had so long been assisting to destroy, was on fire.

Wearied and fatigued as were the English, they

now redoubled their efforts, and directed their fire with still greater vigour towards the enemy. At length their exertions were crowned with complete success; the battering ships blew up one after the other with a most dreadful explosion. Huge pieces of timber, mingled with human beings, were seen whirling rapidly through the air, whilst the cries and groans of the wounded and drowning Spaniards were distinctly heard amidst the roar of the cannon, and the loud acclamations of the conquerors. The carnage was truly awful; and but for the humanity of the English, who, at the hazard of their own lives, assisted in saving some of their fallen foes, thousands more would inevitably have perished in this disastrous enterprise.

The exultation of Corporal C. at this success knew no bounds: for a moment reason seemed to have vacated her seat. He danced about like a maniac, and shouted, "Hurrah! victory! victory!" with all his might: and so loud and long did he continue his shouts, that at length his voice failed him, and it was some days before he recovered it. In this dreadful encounter he escaped unhurt, with the exception of a slight wound in the leg, occasioned by a splinter from the rock. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, preserved his life for the performance of acts of benevolence and mercy, and that he might afterwards become a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

How awful are the effects of war! It calls into exercise the worst passions of human nature, and leads a man to triumph over the sufferings of his fellow-man, and to rejoice at his defeat and destruction. But truly horrific is the thought, of

thousands and tens of thousands of the human family being thus launched into an eternal world without a moment's time for serious reflection, or an opportunity for preparing to meet their God. The mind sickens at the contemplation, and turns from it with abhorrence.

Though all hopes of taking Gibraltar by open force were now abandoned, the Spaniards still continued the blockade, both by sea and land; and the soldiers, having a little more leisure, spent much of their time in drinking and gambling. One night, while engaged in this occupation, Mr. C. had a very narrow escape from death. He had just sat down to play a game at cards with some comrades, when a shell, thrown by the enemy, fell into the house. All rose up, and threw down their cards, expecting the shell to burst, and involve them instantly in one common ruin. The Lord, however, still preserved this reckless and impious man; for the shell, on its explosion, damaged only the opposite part of the building, though it killed in its descent another person, who had followed the soldier into the house.

On the 11th October, 1782, the garrison was greatly relieved by the arrival of a large cargo of provisions from England, which Lord Howe, by a masterly manœuvre, succeeded in landing, in the face of a superior fleet.

In 1783, Mr. C., through his good behaviour, was appointed master-tailor to the regiment, which employment was the means of furnishing him with an income superior to that of many of the commissioned officers. He applied himself industriously to business, and succeeded in amassing (for a person in his situation) considerable property;

But one evening, while absent, a shell broke through his quarters, and destroyed the building, together with all he possessed. This was a severe loss, especially as he expected soon to return to England, without the opportunity of repairing it; but it was, nevertheless, wisely overruled by Divine Providence for his ultimate good.

In September, 1783, the preliminaries of peace having been signed, the siege was broken up; and on the 20th of the following month, Mr. C. was married to a most amiable young woman, who had only just entered upon her sixteenth year. So great was the estimation in which the parties were held, that Lieutenant-General Boyd was present at the marriage ceremony, and gave away the bride. The war having terminated, he looked forward to a state of uninterrupted happiness and prosperity.

CHAPTER II.

FROM HIS MARRIAGE TO HIS REMOVAL TO
KINGSLAND.

THE period at length arrived when Mr. Cranfield was to leave Gibraltar, where, since the year 1777, he had been cooped up within the narrow limits of the fortress, in which he had been exposed to such hardships, fatigues and dangers, as none but those possessed of a strong constitution could have endured. At one time the scurvy had made such inroads upon his bodily frame, (not having tasted fresh provisions for nearly two years and a half,) that his life was in imminent danger; but a diligent and persevering use of lemon-juice, of which he was careful to obtain frequent supplies, proved, by the blessing of God, the means of counteracting the baneful effects of this disorder. On the morning of the 30th October, 1783, he embarked with his regiment in a man-of-war for England, where, however, he did not arrive till the December following.

On reaching England, he was called upon to endure a trial which he little anticipated. His wife was not permitted to accompany him on his voyage, but was placed with the rest of the females on board a transport, which left Gibraltar in company with the other vessel. On the passage

homeward, however, she parted company, and took a different course. Mr. C. having been so long on his voyage, fully expected that his wife would have arrived in England a considerable time before him; but great was his disappointment, on landing, to find that nothing had been seen or heard of the transport.

On the evening of the 17th December, the anxious husband, disappointed and much dejected, retired to rest, but sleep forsook his eyes; a thousand perplexing thoughts agitated his mind respecting the safety of his beloved wife. He also reflected that he had married without the knowledge of his parents, and was fearful that he should thereby incur their displeasure, as he knew that they had already chosen a partner for him in England. He resolved, therefore, to inform them forthwith of the important step he had taken, and of his earnest desire that they would treat his youthful wife with respect and affection. Accordingly, when he arose in the morning, he wrote the following letter:—

“Southampton, 18th December, 1783.

“HONOURED FATHER AND MOTHER,

“Thanks be to God, I am quite well. I have received no letter since that of the 3d of May last, which you sent me by a young man that came to Gibraltar in a brig. I rejoice to think that God has been so gracious as to let me see my native country again. I left Gibraltar on the 30th of October, and arrived safely in this town on the 17th instant. We had a long and tedious voyage. You must know, that since my last I have entered into a new state of life; that is, marriage. I own

that I have been very undutiful to you, in the first place, for not asking your approbation. The courtship was so short, the regiment having received orders to embark, that it was impossible for me, had I written, to have received an answer from you before we left Gibraltar. I was married on the 20th October, 1783; and as it is now unalterable, I hope it will meet with your approbation; if not, do not let me lie under the weight of your displeasure for ever. My wife's name is Sarah Connolley, the daughter of a corporal in the regiment, and bears an excellent character. Her father and mother have been very good to me; and before I left Gibraltar, gave me a house in the town, which at one time was worth fifty pounds; but when I came away, I could obtain no more than six guineas and a half for it. My wife is not yet arrived in England; for all the women of the regiment are on board a transport, and we came in the Ganges and Ardent men-of-war; they sailed the same time as we did, but steered a different course; we expect them, however, daily. I am to get my discharge to-morrow or the next day, and mean to set off for London as soon as my wife arrives, or things will permit, and to live in peace once more.

“My father and mother-in-law desire to be remembered to you both, and would be glad to carry on a correspondence with you. They hope that their daughter will be a credit to your family, and that you will receive her with every mark of kindness and affection. Be so good as to let me hear from you by the return of post, so that I may know whether by my undutiful conduct I have lost your favour or not. I own I have deserved your

displeasure, but I trust you will forgive me, as you hope for forgiveness at the hands of the Almighty.

“I have nothing else to add at present, as I hope to be with you shortly. May God bless you both, and enable you to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, by having on the girdle of truth and the shield of faith, so that you may be able to stand in the great day of judgment, which is the prayer of

“Your affectionate and dutiful son,

“THOS. CRANFIELD, Corporal.”

After putting this letter in the post-office, he went to the water-side to obtain some tidings of the absent ship, but no vessel had arrived, and he was still doomed to remain in the utmost suspense. His time, however, being occupied in settling his affairs with the regiment and obtaining his discharge, his thoughts were for a short time directed into another channel.

On Mr. C.'s application for his discharge, he having agreed to serve only during the war, the colonel of the regiment expressed his unwillingness to part with him, and offered him the sum of five guineas, and further promotion, if he would stay; but as he had written to his father informing him of his return, and as his mind was entirely made up on the subject, the offer was declined, and he was discharged, to the regret of all, both officers and men.

Every thing being now in readiness, he waited only the arrival of his wife to take his departure for London. Day passed after day without any tidings being heard of either her or the vessel in which she had embarked; his anxiety of

mind became almost insupportable, and if he could have obtained a vessel, he would have gone in search of her—but this was utterly impossible. At length, however, the long-expected vessel appeared in sight, and after seven days of the most anxious suspense, Mr. C. again embraced the beloved object in whom his thoughts had been so long centred. He now thought himself the happiest of men. With a light heart he took leave of his old comrades, and, accompanied by his wife, he proceeded to London, and arrived safely at his father's house on the evening of 24th December, after an absence of nearly eleven years. The meeting was truly pleasing and affecting. The father received his long-lost son with feelings like those described in the parable of the Prodigal, exclaiming, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." He viewed him as being sent back to him by the hand of God, and entirely in answer to prayer.

After the detail of his principal adventures and escapes, the Bible was placed upon the table, and, to his great surprise, his father commenced reading a chapter. When this was finished, he was still more astonished to hear his father say, "Now, let us go to prayer." All knelt down, and he began with great fluency and fervour to express his gratitude to that God who had answered his prayers in bringing back his only son in health and safety. Mr. C. was amazed to hear his father proceed with such freedom of speech; and prompted by curiosity, he arose from his knees, and looked across the table to ascertain if his father was using a book; but when he saw him with his eyes closed, and no book before him, he was lost in astonish-

ment, and, as he often afterwards expressed it, "could scarcely believe his own eyes."

At six o'clock the following morning, being Christmas-day, Mr. C. was prevailed on by his father to accompany him to hear the Rev. R. Cecil. His text was Psalm xlv. 9, "He maketh wars to cease." The subject of the discourse, and the powerful appeals of the minister, strongly riveted his attention, and he returned home much gratified. His father, therefore, had little difficulty afterwards to persuade him to accompany him to Blackfriars' church to hear the Rev. W. Romaine. On that morning a very unusual circumstance took place. Some persons in the Rev. Mr. R.'s congregation, thinking his style of preaching too plain and common, had requested him to exhibit a little more learning in the pulpit; accordingly he read his text in Hebrew. "Now," said he, "I suppose scarcely one in this congregation understands that." He then read it in Greek, and added, "Perhaps there may be one or two that understand me now: I will next read it in Latin." He did so, and said, "Possibly a few more may comprehend me, but the number is still very limited." He last of all repeated the text in English: "There," he continued, "now you all understand it; which do you think is best? I hope always so to preach as that the meanest person in the congregation may comprehend me."

Such a circumstance naturally produced a feeling of interest in the mind of a young man fond of novelty, and whose chief motive in attending the means of grace was curiosity, and he resolved to hear that preacher again. On the following day he visited some of his old companions, and, re-

turning home late in the evening in a state of intoxication, he found his pious father at family prayer. Being bereft of his proper senses, he became very troublesome, and with his hand swept every thing from the mantel-shelf. His father said little to him that night ; but in the morning, when sense and reason were awakened, he gave him a severe reprimand for his improper conduct ; explained to him the awful consequences of sin, and the impossibility of his remaining under the paternal roof if he persisted in such evil practices.

This remonstrance appeared to produce its desired effect, and on the following Sabbath he requested permission to accompany his father to church. The Rev. Mr. Romaine was preaching a series of lectures on the building of Solomon's temple, and showed wherein it typified Christ. In one of these discourses, as the esteemed minister dwelt more than usual upon the depravity of the human heart, and its opposition to the sovereignty and dominion of God, and showed that this division between God and the creature would not admit of any union without a change of nature, his mind became in some degree convinced of the awful state of its alienation from God, and the necessity of regeneration. And although his first impressions were comparatively slight, and this change in his views and feelings was scarcely perceptible, yet in the course of a few days it became evident that a principle of grace had been imparted, and that He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness had shined into his heart. His pious father, who was on the watch for the first tokens of true penitence in his son, now observed with much satisfaction a decided change in his conduct,

and took every opportunity of encouraging him in his inquiries, and of directing him to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He continued to attend the ministry of the Rev. Mr. R., and by slow degrees he was directed into the knowledge and love of God.

Convinced of the value of his own soul, he now began to feel an ardent desire for the salvation of others. The spiritual welfare of his relatives was the first subject that occupied his mind, and he prayed that the Lord would make him instrumental in their conversion. He commenced the work with his wife; and upon declaring to her what the Lord had done for his soul, and expressing his anxiety that she should become a partaker of the like precious faith, he was both surprised and delighted to find that the Spirit of God had already been secretly working upon her soul, and that, through the pious example of her father-in-law, she had become solicitous about the "one thing needful."

Mrs. C., previous to her arrival in England, was a perfect stranger to family devotion; she was therefore as much astonished as her husband to hear her father-in-law expound the Scriptures and engage in prayer. Being, however, a woman of discernment, she was not long in discovering how much his conduct was influenced, and his happiness promoted, by his religion; and how superior were the order and devotion observed in the family of her husband's relatives, from the scenes of mirth and irregularity she had witnessed in her own. She reflected, that if such holiness of life was required for a participation in the joys of heaven, she was unfit for the blissful state, and,

consequently, unprepared to die. The thought much distressed her mind, and she began to inquire what she must do to be saved. The exhortations of her husband therefore were listened to with the greatest interest and profit, and she soon afterwards gave evident proofs, by her holy life and conversation, that she had become a partaker with him of the grace of life.

His attention was next directed to his wife's relatives, who were then in Ireland with their regiment. He wrote several letters to them, expressing his deep interest in their spiritual welfare, showing them the Lord's gracious dealings towards him, and earnestly exhorting them to renounce the world, and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus. But here he had little success: "His words appeared to them like idle tales, and they believed him not."

After remaining in his father's house a few months, he took apartments and continued to follow the business of a tailor; and becoming acquainted with some young persons who, like himself, had lately been called to the knowledge of the truth, he instituted a daily prayer-meeting at his own residence, and thereby his spiritual strength was continually renewed and invigorated.

He had not been long in his new abode, before he began to experience severe trials. The winter was setting in; employment was scarce; his little stock of money was expended, and he became extremely straitened in his circumstances. In the midst of this distress, his wife gave birth to a son, their first-born; and while he embraced the infant with a heart filled with love and gratitude to Him who hath said, "Children are an heritage of the

Lord," his difficulty in obtaining the comforts necessary in this season of parental solicitude, caused him the greatest anxiety and distress. Still his mind was supported by the promises of the gospel, and he was enabled to rejoice under all his tribulations. His feelings under this trial, and in the prospect of others, will be better understood by his own letter to his parents, written soon after the birth of his son.

" Feb. 18th, 1785.

" **LOVING PARENTS,**

" I cannot help taking notice that you seem much concerned about my troubles. I wish you to make yourselves easy: 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' for my Lord says, 'In me ye shall have peace, though in the world ye shall have tribulation:' and I do experience it to an extent that it is impossible for me to describe. I cannot help relating an extraordinary circumstance of God's dealings with me. As I was going the other Saturday evening to the Tabernacle, I prayed as I went, that God would have mercy upon me. When I took my seat, I opened my Bible, and the following words attracted my attention—'Fear thou not; for I am with thee,' Isa. xli. 10. The comfort I felt was more than I can express. Soon after this I went through a great deal of trouble, but 'He was faithful that had promised,' for I saw his hand in all my troubles; and on the 16th of January, the Lord renewed that promise again, with 'Be not dismayed.'

think, the more of God's mercies I see, the more sinful I become. I cannot explain my present state more plainly than God has done in Jeremiah xxx from the 11th to the 16th verse. So be not

surprised if you hear of fiery trials which are to try me; these are the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes; but the Lord makes it up in the long-run, for this trial I have found to my good. I write that you may not fret, for I think as much of your fretting as I do of my sufferings. Let me beseech you to thank God, and sing the riches of his grace, that you, who were the instruments of bringing me into this world of sin and woe, have been led to pray that my sins may be forgiven, and that I may be brought into the liberty of the gospel. Do not, therefore, be surprised at my suffering affliction with the people of God. You know that God the Father told his Son, that if his children broke his laws, and forsook his ways, he would correct them; so it is in love to me it is done. I am sure that God loves me, else why am I thus? Oh that the Lord would keep me from murmuring! for when I look at my beloved wife and child, and think what the Lord has brought me through, his goodness constrains me to say, 'He has done all things well.' I am sure, were I to have all the riches of the world, I should not be so happy as I am now, for every trial drives me to God, but riches would rather drive me from him. And if God has decreed that I shall be poor, who can make me rich? for he says, 'I make poor, and I make rich. I the Lord do all these things.' 'And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?' If we cannot do that which is least, why take we thought for the rest? But of this I am certain, He that gave me life, will also give me food to support that life. 'For the life is more

than meat' Thus I am enabled to rejoice in my greatest afflictions.

' I thank you for all your kindness. I cannot reward you, but Jesus Christ will, for 'He is faithful that has promised' that 'you shall in nowise lose your reward.' I write this to show you it is the will of God that I shall be thus, and that your minds may be easy; for I am in want of nothing now but love, and would beg an interest in your prayers, that God would make me faithful to the grace that he has given me; so that when he shall call me hence, I may give a good account of my stewardship. I beg you will not be angry with me for thus writing, as I cannot tell you the sentiments of my mind in any other way. God bless you with strength and health, and above all with soul-prosperity, which is the earnest prayer of

“ Your son,

“ THOS. CRANFIELD.”

His difficulties, however, did not impede his usefulness; for about this time the Lord was pleased to bless his endeavours in the conversion of two lodgers in the house where he resided. One of them was a woman of a very bad character, and a great persecutor of the children of God. He often spoke to her upon the sinfulness of the human heart, and the necessity of regeneration; but she evinced such an opposition to every thing like serious conversation, that it was extremely difficult to prevail upon her for one moment to listen to a word of exhortation. While they were singing hymns at the prayer-meeting, she would frequently endeavour to interrupt them by singing immoral songs. One day, however, she appeared

more friendly than ordinary towards Mr. C., and invited him and his wife to take tea with her. He consented, though with some reluctance, it being the Sabbath-day. While at tea, he introduced the subject of religion, and spoke of the sovereignty of God in calling sinners by his grace from a state of nature to a state of holiness. The words "*called* by his grace" entered into her very soul. She became thoughtful; but at that time said little. At night she retired to rest, but could not sleep: conviction darted into her mind, and she became extremely restless and uneasy, and at length cried out, "I am lost! I am not *called*." She started from her bed, and, like one bereft of her senses, tore her clothes, vociferating, "Oh, what shall I do to be saved?" Mr. C. and his wife got up, and endeavoured to comfort her; but she refused to be comforted, and continued to exclaim, "Oh, what shall I do! I am not called!" She remained in this frantic condition for four days; and on the Thursday evening following, Mr. C. took her with him to church. The text was Ezekiel xxxvii. 12. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Under this sermon her soul was set at liberty, and she henceforth became a humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Shortly after this circumstance, Mr. Cranfield was honoured in being made instrumental of the conversion of another poor woman.

Upon joining the church, he was introduced to a number of young friends, who feared the Lord

greatly. He attended their prayer-meetings, and found those seasons to be "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

His soul was now fired with zeal for the glory of God, and he became impatient to be more actively employed in his service. Whilst passing through Moorfields, thinking on this subject, he remembered that when a boy he stood upon that spot listening to the overpowering eloquence of the Rev. George Whitefield, as he boldly preached Jesus and the resurrection; and this passage of Scripture came into his mind—"Go thou, and do likewise." He reflected, however, that he had not ability for such an undertaking, and yet it was desirable that the standard of the cross should be erected in the highways and hedges. "Who," thought he, "can I get to be the standard-bearer." This difficulty was soon solved; for very soon after he met with Mr. George Taylor, an old playfellow, who had become pious, and whom the Lord had endowed with a talent for preaching. The subject was proposed for his consideration, and it was finally agreed that Mr. Taylor should take the stand, while Mr. Cranfield should officiate as clerk.*

On the following Sabbath afternoon, Mr. C. carried his chair to the place agreed upon, and his friend boldly preached the glad tidings of salvation to the assembled multitude. Here they endured much insult; some laughed, others scoffed; while some, more violent, threw mud, and even

* These incidents belong to the narrative, but the introduction of them involves no judgment of the wisdom or propriety of the measures.

rotten eggs and dead cats : but they were not to be thus beaten off the field ; their zeal was only stimulated by such opposition, and they were induced thereby to press more boldly forward "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." This practice was continued for about twelve months, Mr. C. sometimes speaking to the people in the absence of his friend.

His heart was now lifted up in the ways of God, but he had soon to pass through deep waters. He began to doubt. He could obtain no comfortable persuasion that he had any faith in Christ, or that he was moving one step in the narrow way, while he was pointing out the road to others. The enmity of his heart against God was so strong, that he was tempted to bid him open defiance. A horror of darkness so encompassed him, that he was reduced almost to despair, insomuch that he resolved to destroy himself. He was actually on his way towards the river's brink for this purpose, when his attention was aroused by the singing of a congregation, and, looking up, he found that he had unconsciously strolled to the Tabernacle. He entered : the song of praise was just concluded, and the minister was about to read his text from Matt. vii. 7, "Seek, and ye shall find." The word came home with power to his soul. It appeared so suitable to his state, that he felt it to be evidently a message from God to him : he was enabled to seek and to find the Saviour, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart. The remembrance of this merciful interference of Providence was ever afterwards cherished by him, and he never ceased to speak of it with the deepest humility and lively gratitude.

In August, 1786, his family was increased by the birth of a daughter; and trade at this time being brisker, his circumstances were considerably improved: but he was again plunged into difficulties, by a fire breaking out in the premises where he resided, which occasioned him considerable loss. This new trial, however, only served to draw him nearer to God, and he was enabled to say from happy experience, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit."

The year 1787 ushered in fresh afflictions. His firstborn son, then between two and three years old, whom he tenderly loved, took the small-pox, and after a short illness died.

In October, 1788, his loss was made up to him by the birth of another son, though he was still detained in the furnace of affliction, which now seemed heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be. His wife just at this critical period was seized with the measles, and so alarming was her illness that her life was despaired of; the infant and his little daughter also took the disorder. For some time all three lingered on the very borders of eternity; the Lord, however, heard the cries of his servant, and eventually the mother with the children were restored to health.

One Sabbath-day, shortly after the recovery of Mrs. Cranfield and the children, when the whole of the family were from home, some thieves broke into his dwelling, and stripped him of almost every article of value. This trying visitation compelled him to remove to another neighbourhood; where, in the midst of poverty and distress,

unknown to any of his friends, he still continued "servent in spirit, serving the Lord."

The year 1789 was one of peculiar suffering, owing to a great stagnation of business. His children frequently cried for bread, when there was none to give them. His distress of mind, under such circumstances, can only be conceived by those who have endured the like affliction; but he was enabled to wrestle hard with God in prayer, and he found him faithful to his word of promise—"Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." Sometimes, however, when his mind was filled with doubts and fears, his affectionate wife would inspire him with fresh confidence, by bidding him to remember the goodness of the Lord towards them in former days, and would repeat to him the verse—

"His love in times past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure to help me quite through."

On one of these occasions he had remained at home the whole of the morning, praying with his wife and children. Dinner-time arrived, but they had no food to place upon the table. His confidence in God was, however, unabated. "Let us pray again," he said, "for the Lord *will* answer prayer." They did so, and had scarcely arisen from their knees, when a knock was heard at the door. It was a female friend, a pious woman, who owed him a shilling. "Come in," said Mr. C., "thou blessed of the Lord, I know what you are come for." "Do you?" said she; "then that is almost more than I know." "Why," he replied, "you have got some money for me. I am in

necessity, and the Lord has sent you to relieve me." "Well," said the woman, "that is singular enough. I was sitting at home by myself, when the thought struck me, that I would go and see Mr. Cranfield. I had got part of the way on my journey, when I remembered that I owed you a shilling, so I returned back for it, and," presenting him with it, "here it is." "There!" said he to his wife, "what a blessed thing it is to live by faith upon the Son of God! Who ever trusted in him, and was confounded?"

This incident he used frequently to relate in his old age, for the encouragement of those who were cast down by reason of the difficulties that surrounded them, and to show them the importance and advantages of continuing instant in prayer.

In April, 1789, he was summoned to witness the death of his little daughter. Although not three years of age, she had attained a maturity of understanding that was truly astonishing. Before she was able to talk, she was frequently found in various parts of the house in the attitude of prayer: she would often come to the shop-board where he was seated, and say, "Papa, pay, pay," (meaning pray.) She had committed several hymns to memory; and one day, whilst her mother was paying more than ordinary attention to her, she, with her eyes lifted up to heaven, said, with an emphasis that excited strong emotion in the heart of her dear parent—

"Are these thy favours day by day

To me above the rest?

Then let me love thee more than they,

And strive to serve thee best."

Very frequently she would leave her play, and beg of her father to talk to her about Jesus. The caution of a celebrated preacher appeared now to be necessary, "Beware of idols in white frocks;" for the dear child, by her engaging manners and amiable disposition, had so entwined herself round the heart of her father, that she seemed quite indispensable to his happiness. But the Lord, who is a jealous God, must reign in the hearts of his people without a rival, and therefore, in mercy to his servant, he visited the fond object of his affections with the small-pox, which disorder shortly afterwards terminated fatally. During her illness she exhibited the most exemplary patience, and never seemed so happy as when her parents were conversing with her about the love of Christ. One day, observing her father and mother in tears, she said, "Mamma, do not cry, I am going to Jesus; you come too." A minister, who happened to call in, asked her if she loved her father. "Yes," she said. "Why do you?" he again inquired. "Because papa talks to me about heaven, and tells me about Jesus." The death of this child inflicted a deep wound in the heart of the father, so that for some days he could not attend to business: he saw, however, the wisdom of the Divine procedure, and declared that from henceforth he would never have another favourite in his family.

As Mr. and Mrs. Cranfield always carried a respectable outward appearance, their distressed circumstances were known to very few; and their father being much afflicted, could render them but little aid; though whenever that little was afforded, it was always received with a grateful heart.

About this time, passing through Kingsland, Mr. C. was struck with the ignorance and wickedness which abounded in that neighbourhood, and consulted with some Christian friends upon the best mode of introducing the gospel there. After much consideration, it was agreed, that a prayer-meeting should be held among the brick-makers. Mr. C., accordingly, applied to their foreman, who readily consented to open his house for that purpose. This meeting was held every morning at five o'clock, and once a week in the evening, and Mr. C. was rarely absent on these occasions.

Towards the close of the year, being unable, notwithstanding every exertion, to honour a bill which he had accepted, Mr. C. was arrested, and placed in a debtor's prison. This was to him as great a trial as any through which he had previously passed, as it threw a shade over his character and reputation. His heart, however, was still lifted up to the Lord, and the God in whom he trusted did not forsake him. In his way to the prison, these words were strongly impressed upon his mind—"I will be with thee." For the two following days, however, he was much dejected, and the distress of his mind was greatly increased, by hearing that his landlord had put an execution into his house for rent. He again cried mightily to the Lord, and this passage of Scripture occurred with comfort and power to his soul: "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee." Here he remained for about four days, when, through the assistance of a friend, the money was paid, and Mr. C. obtained his discharge. Soon after his return home, finding it

impossible to meet the just demands of his landlord, the few articles of furniture which he possessed were taken, and he resolved to leave the house where he had suffered so many trials.

But "though cast down," he was "not in despair." His faith and hope in God still abounded, and the Lord, who was now leading him by a way he knew not, was present to help him. As he was passing along the streets with his wife and child, he remembered that it was the evening for prayer at Kingsland, and thither he bent his steps. His friends, who had heard of his trouble, received him with great joy, and most fervently invoked the blessing of God upon him and his family. After the meeting was over, one of the company, a man who kept a public-house in the neighbourhood, invited him home, and told him he was at liberty to take up his lodgings there, until he could obtain another place of residence. This offer he gladly accepted, and stayed there that night, but on the next day he took a house on Kingsland Green, although he had no furniture to place in it, save what he could borrow of his friends. Here he took up his abode, trusting in the Lord to supply all his need: for he has often declared that at this time he had no knowledge of the means by which the next day's provision was to be procured.

Such was the trying providence, which forced Mr. Cranfield from his home, and compelled him to repair for shelter to his friend's at Kingsland. But "affliction cometh not forth of the dust;" there was One above who was secretly managing the storm, and rendering it subservient to the performance of his designs of mercy: and his

purpose being accomplished of placing his servant in this neighbourhood, where he intended to make him instrumental in spreading the light of the gospel, the storm soon afterwards began gradually to subside, the clouds to disperse, and the horizon to brighten, indicating the approach of a calmer and happier day.

CHAPTER III.

FROM HIS REMOVAL TO KINGSLAND TO HIS QUITTING
THE LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

ON the first day of taking up his abode in his new place of residence, Mr. Cranfield spent much time in prayer that the Lord would again appear in his behalf, and bless his endeavours to procure a maintenance for himself and family. On the following morning, he received an order from a gentleman for a suit of clothes. This order, however, he could not immediately execute, as he did not possess a single shilling wherewith to purchase the cloth. He waited, therefore, upon the gentleman, and informed him of his circumstances, who advanced him two guineas, when he and his wife commenced their work with extraordinary diligence. He did not retire to rest till the clothes were completed, which occupied him two whole nights and three days. Fresh orders now came in: his business gradually increased; and at the end of a few months, he was again a prosperous man.

During the first few weeks of his residence at Kingsland, however, his mind was kept in a constant state of anxiety, in consequence of having to provide for the payment of two bills of accept-

ance, the one for £11, due on the 4th January, and the other for £10, on the 25th, besides some outstanding debts, which, from several losses and disappointments in trade, he had been unable to discharge.

A few extracts from a diary, which he commenced on New-Year's day, will show his feelings and experience, whilst struggling against these pecuniary difficulties :

“ January 1st, 1790.—‘ Trust in the Lord at all times,’ *Psa. lxii. 8.* This is the lesson I would learn at all times, and in all situations. Lord, make me a good scholar this year, I beseech thee. I begin the year with great trial : in prospect of eleven pounds to pay on the fourth instant, without one single shilling towards it. But I trust in my God, who is my strength and my helper, and I doubt not but he will give it me. Before me are about twenty or thirty pounds more. Lord, help me to trust in thee. I have been committing myself into the hands of my God this day at his house, feeling and believing that he has accepted me for my Jesus’ sake.

“ 2d.—‘ Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in him ; and he shall bring it to pass,’ *Psa. xxxvii. 5.* This day much tried with disappointments and crosses, but am kept from sinking. His arms are underneath me, supporting and comforting me under this trial.—No eleven pounds yet.—Lord, keep me patient, for Christ’s sake.

“ 3d.—“ Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,’ *Psa. lv. 22.* I have been enabled in some measure to do so. I regret I have not kept this Sabbath as I could have wished ; but the Lord has been pleased to afford me a little of

the light of his countenance. Blessed be his name for ever.—No money as yet.—The time is up to-morrow morning, and I doubt not but my God will appear for me. In this confidence I lay my body down to sleep.

“4th.—‘The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?’ Psa. xxvii 1. This-morning the Lord has made bare his arm, and brought me the money. Glory be to his name for ever. I feel my heart enlarged, and my soul is set at liberty, therefore I will praise him. The Lord alone delivered me, for all hearts are in his hand, and he has the whole disposal of them; consequently, I have no reason to fear. In God will I make my boast all the day long.”*

How delightful, though difficult, is the practice of thus living by faith upon the Son of God! How does it sweeten the bitter cup of affliction, and unravel to the distressed and humble believer the meaning of the apostle, when he says, “Having nothing, yet possessing all things!” In thus tracing our deliverance to the proper source, and giving God all the glory, our faith is increased, our hope confirmed, and we are filled with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. Such is the experience of all Christians, and such was the experience of the subject of this memoir, as will be seen upon the perusal of some further extracts from his diary:—

* The writer of this memoir is not aware in what manner this seasonable supply was obtained; nor was he at all conscious that this interesting record of the goodness of God was in existence until after the death of Mr. C. But what ever might be the means by which his difficulties were removed, it is pleasing to know that he was enabled to view the hand of God in his deliverance.

“January 5th.—‘And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power Eph. i. 19.

“Nothing short of the power of God can make me believe; and something of this power I have experienced this day, as evidently as the children of Israel did when the Red Sea was dried up before them. I stood in need of a guinea, and the Lord sent it me at the time I most wanted it. Blessed be his name, he has never left me yet.”

The guinea to which he here alludes, he used often afterwards to speak of to his family with great animation and lively feelings of gratitude. It was put into his child’s hand by an elderly lady, who visited him that day, and was proverbial for her extreme parsimony. Though possessed of wealth, she denied herself even the common necessities, and was never known to perform so benevolent an act before. Under such circumstances, Mr. Cranfield might well observe and acknowledge the hand of God in affording him this relief.

During the eight following days, his diary is full of expressions of gratitude and praise, and of strong confidence and trust in God. But on the 14th, his heart appears to have been again cast down.

“January 14th.—‘In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.’ Psa. lxxi. 1. How seldom is it that I can come to this point; to trust the Lord! I am beset on every side; I know not what to do. Refuge seems to fail me. Oh for a confidence in God, to leave all with him. How shall I get it? I find not: I pray, I seek at his house, I watch, but it

seems to be in vain. God knows, however, what he is about with me. My way is ordered by infinite wisdom; and when he has tried me, I shall come forth like gold. I believe he will not fail me, for he has engaged his honour to bring me through. Into thy hands I therefore commit my soul and body. Dear Jesus, support me. Amen.

“15th.—‘Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.’ Isa. xxxviii. 14. Every thing looks black around me. Never was I in such a strait. Oh, dispel the cloud! Dear Jesus, look on me! Lord, have pity on me, for Jesus’ sake. Oh, work salvation for me, or I die! I have none else to look to but thee. All power is in thy hands. Have mercy on me, O Lord, and save me.”

Nothing more is written for a whole week, when he goes on to say—

“‘The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him.’ This is a truth. Though storms beset me, yet it is all well. ‘This is the Lord’s doing.’ Though the path seems crooked, yet it is all right. I am in debt to the amount of thirty or forty pounds: the Lord, I trust, will bring me through, and I shall praise him. I have on Monday to pay ten pounds, and the Lord knows I have not one shilling in the house. But he that has brought me through six and seven troubles, will bring me through this also, and I shall praise him.”

On the following Monday, the day the money was to be paid, he thus writes:—

“25th.—‘And as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.’ Matt. viii. 13. This day I have to set to my seal that God is true. I have a note to pay this day, for which I had not sufficient money, and the Lord hath sent me five guineas

to pay it with. Blessed be his name, I never trusted in him, and was confounded. Oh, his truth endures from generation to generation, world without end. The Lord will help his people that trust in him; and none that trust in him shall be desolate. He is a Friend in the worst times, and we may put confidence in him, and be assured he will not leave us. I find my soul overcome in admiration of the love of God. Blessed be his name that ever I knew him. I must pay my rent this week: the Lord only knows where it is to come from. But I will trust him, my only Friend, who has brought me thus far. Lord, help me to look up. Amen."

After such powerful wrestlings with God, the mind becomes prepared to receive the tidings of seasonable support, and complete deliverance. Being convinced from past experience of the power of prayer, he sought the Lord as one that was in earnest, being determined to give him no rest until he obtained the blessing. The singular manner in which he sometimes obtained his suitable supplies tended much to increase his confidence in God, and to induce him to come boldly to the throne of grace. The receipt of the five guineas deserves particular notice. On the morning of the day he was to pay the ten pounds, he was walking to and fro in front of his house, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, reflecting what he should do under his present circumstances, when a gentleman, residing in the next house, called to him, and asked if he was well. Mr. Cranfield was surprised at this inquiry, as they knew but little of each other, and were not even upon speaking terms. He thanked him for his kind-

ness, and replied that he was well in body, but was rather distressed in his mind. The gentleman then invited him into his house, inquired into the cause of his distress, and informed him that if there was any thing he could do to assist him, he should feel a pleasure in doing so. After some hesitation, Mr. C. told him of his pecuniary difficulties; and upon learning that he wanted five guineas to make up the amount of his acceptance, the gentleman immediately advanced the sum, telling him that he did not wish him to return it until he could do so without any inconvenience to himself. This circumstance left a deep impression on his mind, and he often afterwards spoke of it in the family circle, to excite in his children a similar dependence on God for the supply of all their necessities.

Upon reviewing the difficulties from which he had been extricated, he says—

“February 19th.—I have laboured under a great deal of affliction, both in body and mind. ‘My soul has been overwhelmed with sorrow, but God was with me, and was my strength and stay.’ I never had my religion more tried. An evidence of personal piety in such a time is worth more than gold. Affliction of itself is no plea for his favour. I have this day given myself up into his hands, and surrendered my body, soul, tongue, and pen, all I have and am, to his service; I would freely devote myself to him, living and dying. Amen.”

Notwithstanding the difficulties that beset him, Mr. C. was every morning busily employed at the prayer-meeting, among the brick-makers; and in the midst of frost and snow he was accustomed

to go round and invite his friends, that the place might be full. Several other labouring men had now joined the little company, so that the apartment which they occupied was too small for their accommodation. Being unwilling that any should be shut out, he consulted with his friends upon the subject, and it was thought advisable to obtain a larger room, and, though thus embarrassed in his circumstances, he hired one called the "Factory," near to the turnpike, and became responsible for the rent. Here he engaged his friend, Mr. George Taylor, to come and preach, whilst he officiated as clerk. The little band soon increased; and, notwithstanding the obloquy and ridicule which they encountered from the inhabitants, who gave them the name of "Devil-dodgers," they were joined by several gentlemen of respectability, among whom were the late Joshua Reyner, Esq., one of the originators of the Religious Tract Society, and James Robert Burchett, Esq. of Doctors' Commons. Besides the meetings held here, others were attended at various houses, and the Lord added to their numbers daily.

In his visits from house to house, having witnessed much severe distress among the sick poor, he drew up a plan for the formation of a benevolent society, for the purpose of more regularly visiting and relieving the necessitous at their own houses, he himself acting as secretary. In the first year of the society, the sum of nearly £20 was distributed among distressed individuals, in weekly sums of from one to three shillings.

Towards the middle of this year, Mr. Cranfield's circumstances assumed a favourable aspect, and he was enabled to disengage himself from the

difficulties with which he was surrounded. No memorandum, however, is given of his experience till September 28th, when he thus writes:—

“To my shame, I have not written of God’s dealings towards me since February last. In this great interval, I have had to ascribe glory to God, for he has been my help and stay. I have paid most of the money which in February I owed; and in a little time, by the assistance of my God, I shall pay all. I have had much of the presence of my God during this interval, and have been supported and comforted by a glorious promise which he has given me—‘The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed on the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him to the will of his enemies.’ I can truly say he has fulfilled that promise to me. He still blesses me, and keeps me alive in my soul. I therefore will trust in him, and not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, for the God of Jacob is my refuge. I have set out afresh this day with a determination to give no occasion of offence either to my soul or to man, and in the strength of God to live to his glory.

“September 29th.—‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.’ While my eyes are fixed upon Jesus, I have peace and joy. Thus it has been with me this morning. I have had much of the Lord’s presence, and have been enabled to rejoice in him as my only portion and Friend. I know he is faithful to his promise and his people.”

Whilst residing at Kingsland Mr. C. used fre-

quently to attend the Tabernacle, and Blackfriars church; and under the ministry of the word at those places, he greatly increased in knowledge and spirituality. At times the gospel came with such power to his soul, that he could scarcely refrain from giving utterance to his feelings in the midst of the congregation. On these occasions he would bite his lips, and knit his brow, in such a manner, as plainly indicated the difficulty with which he laboured in suppressing his excited feelings. It was, no doubt, after experiencing some such time of refreshing, that he wrote the following:—

“October 5th.—I have this night been at the Tabernacle, and am refreshed. I see more and more the awful nature of sin; that it is infinite. I see that I am polluted all over—that there is no soundness in me. I see that I come infinitely short of God’s word. I feel that I am a wretch undone. I think I never breathed after holiness more than I do at this time. I want to be made like Christ in every sense of the word—in heart, in lip, and in life. I feel, by experience, that through frequent secret prayer, sin is mortified, and my mind is made more holy and heavenly. This also gives me a distaste for every thing that is sinful. Lord, keep me in this frame. I lay me down this night with a firm desire to be holy, as God is holy. May Jesus sanctify me. Amen.”

The following week he thus writes:—

“October 12th.—The Lord has given me this day some delightful discoveries of himself, as my Saviour and Friend. Oh the glories which I see in Christ! glories that far excel every description. He has enabled me, also, to see much of myself;

so that I appear in my own eyes as a monster. I hate myself with perfect hatred. The Lord has led me, this day, much into the knowledge of his word. Oh, what a precious treasure it is! I really esteem it more than my daily food. Oh that I could live more to his praise. Lord, make me any thing, so that I may live to thy glory. If it is thy will, make me so poor as to be obliged to lie upon straw, and to clothe myself with rags, and have nothing but a hard crust for my food, and a little water, if it be but the means of bringing me nearer to thyself, and of preventing me from becoming a scandal to thy holy cause. Give me a love for precious souls, and a heart to visit and relieve the poor. Lord, grant me this, for Christ's sake. Amen."

At this time his Bible was his constant companion—he always had it with him on the shop-board while at work, and would read a small portion, and then meditate upon it while he pursued his occupation. This exercise was so delightful to him, that he has frequently declared that it was a grief for him to leave it only for a few minutes for the purpose of taking his meals.

On the 14th October, he thus writes:—

“ ‘The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. Blessed be my covenant God, he is always found of them that seek him; I can say so by experience; he communes from off his mercy-seat with such sinners as I am. This morning, when I was at the throne of grace, he led me much into myself. It is impossible for heart to conceive what creatures we are by nature—what a depth of iniquity lodges within our breast. What reason

have we to fear ourselves ! Solomon spake truth when he said, ‘ He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.’ I see that nothing but destruction lodges within me ; I am entirely an enemy to myself, and am not capable of doing any good thing. Oh, what reason, then, have I to give myself up to God, to be guided by him who alone can guide me aright to heaven ; and how seldom do I give up myself in reality ! I must first be convinced that I cannot guide myself, before I can ever give myself to be guided by another. Secondly, I must count the cost. Sometimes it is necessary that I should be deprived of earthly goods, in order to wean my affection from the world. Sometimes a child must be taken away—sometimes I must be in debt, and people sent to plague me for their money—sometimes there must be sickness—and at others imprisonment. We stand in need of some cross or other, in order that our souls may be made meet for heaven. Oh, what a mercy it is that God will have any thing to do with us at all ! Then let me never murmur at any cross He is pleased to put on me ! May I cheerfully take it up, and go on my way rejoicing.”

Though Mr. C. was now in more prosperous circumstances, so active and benevolent was his disposition, that he never could be induced to save money, even when he had the opportunity. He was now a constant visiter of the sick poor, and, frequently coming in contact with objects suffering all the varieties of wretchedness, his hand and his heart were always open for their relief.

Oftentimes his benefactions were so distributed, that the recipient knew not from what quarter the supply came. One Saturday, at the early meet-

ing, he was informed that a pious man, one of the fruits of his labours, had not, through poverty, tasted any meat for several months. At night, therefore, he purchased a leg of mutton; and having tied it to the knocker of the poor man's door, he gave a loud knock, and ran away. On the following morning, after the conclusion of the meeting, the individual related what had happened, and, expressing his fears that some evil was designed against him, asked for advice as to what he had better do with the meat. Every one counselled him to eat it; but it was not till after Mr. Cranfield had repeatedly assured him he would be responsible for his conduct, that the poor man was prevailed upon to do so.

At the close of the year, Mr. C., through his connexion with Messrs. Reyner, Burchett, and other respectable individuals, had such an influx of business, that he deemed it advisable to take two apprentices; and in the year following, another was added to their number. But this extraordinary and sudden change in his affairs produced little alteration in his general conduct, except that it rendered him more extensively useful. He had no love for money, and only valued it as the means of providing for the wants of his family, and of enabling him more effectually to obey the apostolic direction to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

The weather now began to set in very cold, employment was scarce, and the poor inhabitants, especially the brick-makers, were in very great distress. Mr. Cranfield, therefore, began to consider how relief could best be afforded them.

After various things had been suggested to his mind, he at length drew up a plan for raising subscriptions, and purchasing articles of consumption, and retailing them to the poor at very reduced prices. After the five o'clock prayer-meeting, on New-year's morning, 1791, was concluded, Mr. C. read his plan to the persons present. It was a very full meeting, and the plan was approved of by all. Mr. Reyner immediately put his name down for two guineas, others subscribed one. Each gave what he could afford, and then Mr. C. went round the neighborhood to raise contributions from among the inhabitants. By the evening he had collected upwards of £20, which he placed in the hands of Mr. Reyner, who acted as treasurer; and that benevolent gentleman then collected to the amount of £50 more. The first thing they did was to purchase coals, which were then 2s. 3d. per bushel, and a supply of twenty chaldrons was obtained, and deposited in a gentleman's coach-house, the use of which had been obtained for the occasion. Mr. Cranfield was here to be seen every morning with his apron on, busily employed in serving out the coals at sixpence per bushel, tickets for which had previously been obtained. Bread and other necessary articles were provided; and the miseries of the poor, during the whole of the winter, were greatly alleviated. Through the activity of the friends, contributions poured in abundantly from all quarters, so that when the frost broke up, Mr. Reyner had £50 in hand, ready for the next winter. Many of the poor, by these means, were brought to hear the gospel.

About the latter end of 1791, Mr. Cranfield, in order to facilitate the spread of the gospel among the poor, opened a Sunday-school at his own house, and was assisted in the work by a Mr. Gould; while his wife instructed the girls. The number of children soon amounted to sixty; and his room being too small, he removed the school to the Factory

In the summer, public service was frequently conducted in the open green, in front of Mr. C.'s dwelling; and many were thus brought to hear the glorious gospel. In the autumn, application was made to the Rev. Rowland Hill to preach on the green; which he consented to do, and the multitude that assembled to hear him was truly gratifying. This put new life into the whole party. The zeal of Mr. Reyner, and other affluent friends, was stimulated, and the design was formed of building a new place of worship. Subscriptions were raised for this purpose, and eventually a neat chapel was built near the green.

Shortly after the removal of the school to the Factory, Mr. Cranfield left it in the hands of some Christian friends, and proceeded to Stoke-Newington, where he opened another school, and established a prayer-meeting at a friend's house, named Dennington. At this place he laboured for some time; and then resigned it into the hands of other labourers, and opened another at Hornsey.

Here he hired a room in the sexton's house, and commenced a canvas for children. Several attended, and many of the poor inhabitants were brought to hear the gospel. The place being small, it was proposed to assemble the people in the open air. Accordingly, a minister having been provided, the friends were collected together from

Kingsland, among whom was Mr. Reynor. But no sooner had the minister opened his commission, than the whole village was in an uproar. The inhabitants, headed by a rich merchant, and several persons of influence in the village, came in a body with kettles, drums, rattles, bells, and clubs, making the most discordant sounds; but in spite of this treatment, the preacher still continued his address—and the mob, finding that noise was of little avail, tried the effect of blows. Some, therefore, went to work with sticks, and others with stones, by which several persons were injured, and the little party was at length beaten out of the village.

But Mr. Cranfield was not a person who could be put down in this way. He was determined that the poor should have the gospel preached to them; therefore, on the following morning, he and his friends proceeded to the police-office, in Worship-street, and took out warrants against the merchant and other ringleaders of the mob, who were reprimanded by the magistrate. As the charge was not pressed, the offenders were dismissed, after having entered into recognizances to keep the peace.

About 1794, the minister at Kingsland having embraced Arian principles, a division arose in the little church; some of the congregation supported him, but many left, and joined other churches, while a few relapsed into a backsliding state, among whom, it is to be regretted, was the subject of this memoir.

Previous to this time, a society had been formed in London, denominated the “London Corresponding Society,” for the avowed purpose of corresponding with the leaders of the French

revolution, and of obtaining a reformation of abuses in the state, by other means than those pointed out by the constitution as legitimate. The meetings of this society were occasionally attended by Mr. C., and, at length, being enticed by the cry of liberty, he was induced to enrol his name as a member; and, with his characteristic ardour, sought to promote the objects of the institution.

Mr. Cranfield by attending these meetings lost his spirituality. His conscience often accused him, and he frequently resolved to withdraw himself from the connexion; but, by entreaties and persuasions, his resolutions were as often defeated. At length his wife, (whose heart seemed almost broken at this defection from his religious principles,) under the influence of prayer, wrote him a most affectionate letter, and laid it upon his dressing-table. On coming home late at night, the neatly folded epistle caught his attention. He opened it; read its contents; and these words were powerfully brought home to his conscience—"My dear husband, can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" Conviction instantly darted into his mind. He stood self-condemned and he fell down on his knees, confessing his transgressions before God, imploring his forgiveness, and begging his assistance in enabling him to lead a new life. These days of darkness he ever afterwards deplored, and the remembrance of them often excited him to deep humiliation.

In detailing these circumstances in a letter to a friend, some years afterwards, he says, "Some got into a backsliding state, of which I, to my shame, was one: so that our school was neglected,

our prayer-meetings deserted, and the devil gratified. There was now no preaching on the green—our zeal for souls was abated. Ah me! what a black catalogue presents itself! Oh, where are those delightful seasons of hearing, praying, and Christian conversation?

‘What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!’

“Oh, never in this life shall I again taste such sweetness in the love of my Saviour as I then experienced. What greatly added to my distress, was the death of my spiritual guide, the Rev. W. Romaine. Oh, how my mis-improvement under him wounded my guilty soul! It was like a dagger. I followed him to the grave with a heart full of sorrow, and was for some time like a sheep which no man took up, wandering far from the fold.”

After passing a restless night, occasioned by the tender reproof of his wife, so judiciously administered, he arose from his bed with a fixed determination never again to be seen in the camp of the enemy; and after much time spent in prayer and self-abasement, he wrote and signed the following affecting document:—

“Wednesday, 18th June, 1794.

“‘It is high time to awake out of sleep.’

“I, Thomas Cranfield, have given a most awful proof of apostasy from God for near three months. My conscience has been much burdened on account of it, but to no purpose, because I did not watch. I am this day determined to set about a reformation; but, alas! unless God lay hold of me, I am undone; for the work alone must be by Him; therefore, I hope, by his Spirit, to look to

Him for strength, in the first place, to break off my sins that beset me. And oh, that God would help me in this great work ! The next thing, to come out from the world. Lord, lay hold on me, as thou didst upon Lot ; for I linger.

“ The next thing, to neglect no known duty—family or secret prayer. The next thing, to attend more to my business. And the next thing, to spend but little money. This is the way I mean to set out to work :—First of all, to beg God’s blessing on the work ; second, to start back at the appearance of evil, and cry to God for strength against it ; third, to break off all worldly company ; fourth, to pray as soon as I am out of bed—at breakfast with my family—at noon by myself—in the evening with my family, afterwards by myself ; fifth, to give all diligence to my business, and not to spend my time idly in the least ; sixth, not to exceed more than sixpence for spending in a day, unless with my family. And now, Lord, help me. O my Jesus, be present with me in this great work, and Thou shalt have the glory.

“ Signed in the presence of God, and in his fear.

“ THOS. CRANFIELD.”

Thus the Lord again delivered his servant, through the affectionate solicitude and fervent prayers of the devoted partner of his days.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM HIS QUITTING THE LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY,
TO THE OPENING OF THE MINT SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

WHEN the Christian once lays down the weapons of his spiritual warfare, and suffers himself to be taken captive by the enemy of souls, how difficult is his return to the Captain of his salvation! By what slow degrees does he obtain that confidence in God, and that assurance of faith, which he once possessed! Like Christian, in the Pilgrim's Progress, when he lost his roll, how many bitter reflections and achings of heart are the result, before he again recovers the evidence of his sonship, and can

“read his title clear
To mansions in the skies!”

The truth of this observation was severely felt by Cranfield, who, on the day after he had signed his solemn resolution of future amendment, thus writes:—

“Thursday, 19th June, 1794.

“This day I have neglected family prayer, and my mind is much clouded; but I hope God will help me against sin and the tempter's influence. The Lord has promised strength; I have sought

it by secret prayer ; and I hope, notwithstanding all, that I shall have it. In the evening, somewhat refreshed by hearing Mr. Wildbore. May the truth have a lasting impression. Amen.

“ Friday.—Somewhat more comfortable in my mind, but dare not as yet call God my Father.”

From this time to the close of the year 1796, M. Cranfield made no efforts worthy of notice to spread the Redeemer's kingdom. His faith continuing weak, through the temporary suspension of that spiritual agency, from which, alone, it derived all its vigour and activity, he feared to commence any fresh operations against the powers of darkness, lest, in an evil hour, he should again bring discredit on the cause he still loved and wished to serve. This period he ever afterwards considered as lost time, and a misimproved opportunity.

About the commencement of 1797, he removed to Hoxton, and attended the ministry of the Rev. Robert Simpson, at the little chapel adjoining the academy, where he for some time officiated as clerk. He also frequently attended the week-night services at the Tabernacle, and, by degrees, regained that spirituality of mind, that love for the sacred Scriptures, and that ardent zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of souls, for which he had been so eminently distinguished. He was, also, greatly edified by the preaching of the Rev. John Berridge. That excellent man, when in town, had a class of young men, who used to meet him one morning in the week before break fast, and at these meetings Mr. C. was a constant attendant.

Soon after taking up his residence at Hoxton, he felt his mind much distressed by the abounding vice and immorality which he witnessed in various parts of London, and began to consider what could be done towards stemming this torrent of wickedness. Whilst reflecting on the subject, he cast his eye upon a pamphlet which he had formerly published for the London Corresponding Society; and the thought occurred to him, that "it would be best to fight the devil" (as he used to express it) "with his own weapons." He, therefore, called upon his friend Mr. Burchett; and after prayer for direction, it was agreed that a religious tract should be printed, and gratuitously distributed by them in the streets of London and its vicinity. The task of drawing up and printing this tract, Mr. B. took upon himself. It was agreed that the title of it should be "Palm-Sunday," and that one thousand copies should be struck off.

On Palm-Sunday morning, 1797, the two friends met at Shoreditch church, for the purpose of commencing the circulation of these tracts. They took opposite directions; and in the progress of Mr. C.'s labours he came to a wretched district. He was struck with the awful scenes of depravity which everywhere presented themselves; and immediately formed the resolution of forthwith opening a Sunday-school in this abandoned neighbourhood, at Rotherhithe. In the middle of the week, therefore, he again visited it, hired a room, and issued a circular, informing the inhabitants that a school would be opened on the following Sabbath for gratuitous instruction. Mr. C. commenced the work of instruction when upwards

of twenty scholars attended. At this time, he had three children living; and as he could not obtain any other assistant, his wife attended the school with him every Sabbath, though with an infant at her breast. Mr. C. carried another child in his arms; and the third was left at home with a female servant. They dined in the school-room, and returned home in the afternoon to tea. The number of children increasing to upwards of one hundred, Mr. C. applied to Thomas Wilson, Esq. for assistance, who gave him a recommendatory letter to some ministers; but the only help he could obtain, was the privilege of being allowed to take the children to the Rev. John Townsend's chapel, for public worship.

About this time, infidelity appeared to be at its height, and many cheap blasphemous publications, consisting of extracts from the works of Thomas Paine and Voltaire, were freely circulated. These publications were commonly known by the name of "Pigs' Meat." At the shop where these infidel tracts were sold was a kind of box for the reception of communications from correspondents, and this box was called the "Pig-trough."

In order to divert the appetite of the reading public from such works, Mr. Cranfield, by the advice of Mr. Burchett, wrote a pamphlet, entitled "Select Sayings of the Rev. William Romaine," which sayings Mr. C. had taken down at Blackfriars' and St. Dunstan's churches. The manuscript, when completed, was submitted to Dr. Simpson; and he having approved of it, one thousand copies were immediately printed and circulated at Mr. C.'s expense. Of these, five hundred were distributed gratis, and the remainder

were sold at the doors of the Tabernacle, Tottenham Court Road, and Surrey chapels, at one penny each. He afterwards distributed in a similar manner, one thousand copies of the Rev. William Romaine's sermon on the 107th Psalm; and at a subsequent period, he published an "Address to the Rising Generation." This practice, however, he discontinued, upon the formation of the Religious Tract Society in 1799.

The Sunday-school, at Rotherhithe, went on prosperously, and the Lord was pleased to bless the instruction imparted in a remarkable manner to several of the children. One of these, a little girl, was called to her rest about nine months after the opening of the school. Mr. Cranfield visited her in her illness, and she died leaving an interesting testimony to the advantages of Sabbath-school instruction. Several years afterwards, Mr. C. met a friend in Southwark, who asked him if he did not recollect presenting a youth with a Testament at Rotherhithe Sunday-school, as a reward for learning the Epistle to the Ephesians in one week? Mr. C. replied in the affirmative. "Well," said his friend, "that person is now alive: I saw him the other day; and he informed me of the fact, showing me at the same time the Testament you gave him. After he left the school, he went to sea, and that Testament has been four voyages with him to the East Indies. He told me that it was the man of his counsel, his chief companion in all his troubles, and that it had been made a great blessing to his soul."

The more Mr. Cranfield engaged in Sunday-school instruction the more convinced he became of its great importance and utility; and now,

being assisted at Rotherhithe by some members of Mr. Townsend's congregation, he, in December, 1797, opened another Sunday-school in a brick-maker's house at Tottenham. At this place were several youth of most abandoned character, and he calculated upon receiving much annoyance from them; but, contrary to his expectations, these were among the earliest who applied for admission. At first they were rather unruly, but the firmness of Mr. C., tempered by kindness, soon reduced them to submission. Some of them, as soon as they began to perceive the benefits of instruction, formed the plan of meeting at each other's houses after the labours of the day, for the purpose of learning to read; and to facilitate their progress in this exercise, they obtained the assistance of the boys in the Bible class, for which they allowed each one penny per week. Four of these ringleaders in wickedness were subsequently called to the knowledge of the truth.

At this time, the exertions of Mr. Cranfield were very great. When teachers could be obtained for the Tottenham school, he would sometimes go from his house at Hoxton, to the Rotherhithe school, where the cause, through his absence had begun to decline; teach the children till four o'clock in the afternoon, take tea at Hoxton, then accompany the preacher to Tottenham. At the conclusion of the evening service, he would sometimes conduct a prayer-meeting till nine o'clock, and return afterwards to his family at Hoxton.

About the spring of 1798, a member of Mr. Townsend's congregation undertook the charge

of the Rotherhithe school, and afterwards added to it a school of industry for girls.

Mr. C. now directed his whole attention to the one at Tottenham, where he continued to labour with great success till the end of July following, though not without much opposition. At length this school, also, was taken off his hands, by some Wesleyans, who subsequently erected a small chapel near the spot. For the present, however, he still continued to attend the evening worship.

Activity being a leading feature of Mr. Cranfield's mind, he was always diligently employed. He could not endure the thought that, in a world filled with sin and misery, he should sit still and look on, without devising methods to benefit those around him; and while souls were perishing for lack of knowledge, he could not forbear exerting himself to the very utmost, in order to communicate the light of truth, by which he had been made wise unto salvation. On resigning the charge of the school at Tottenham, therefore, he consulted with Messrs. Pound and Carter, fellow members with him of Mr. Towers' congregation, as to what place he should next occupy; when Kent-street, Southwark, was proposed as the most eligible spot. He, therefore, took an early opportunity of reconnoitring this strong-hold of iniquity, and found it inhabited by the lowest of the low, and the vilest of the vile. Gypsies, harlots, thieves, and such-like characters, were to be met with in almost every house. Of late years, this street has not been so notorious as formerly; but at that time, men, women, children, asses, pigs, and dogs, were often found living together in the

same room ; while swearing, blasphemy, and the most obscene conversation, saluted the ear at almost every door. The children appeared in a most deplorable condition, few of them being more than half clad ; their matted hair and dirty appearance inducing the supposition that they were scarcely ever washed or combed.

Mr. Cranfield met his friends in the evening, and reported what he had seen, when one exclaimed, " Can any good thing come out of Kent-street ? " It was agreed to try what could be done, and the next day Mr. C. hired a room at No. 124, at a rent of three shillings per week ; and on the first Sunday in August, 1798, the school was opened. The children attended in considerable numbers, and after he and his friends had instructed them for some time, he ventured to take them to Collyer's Rents chapel ; but it was with the greatest difficulty that he could keep them in order. Scarcely one of them had ever before seen the inside of a chapel ; and so rude and uncultivated were they, that when the service was over, and they had got into the street again, they gave three cheers for the minister.

The opposition which he and his friends encountered in visiting and teaching in this district was dreadful. Every species of insult was heaped upon them : they were pelted with filth of all descriptions, and dirty water was frequently thrown out of the windows upon their heads. This treatment cooled the zeal of the two friends, but Mr. Cranfield, nothing intimidated, pushed forward the work with courage and perseverance, and, though single and alone, he feared not to venture

into the dwellings of the most desperate characters, in search of precious souls—

“Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal!
Nor number, nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single.”

Upon the desertion of his friends, Mr. C. finding it impossible to do the whole of the work himself, applied to his wife, who, notwithstanding the difficulties and discouragements with which she knew she should have to contend, rather than the cause should be abandoned, readily consented to accompany him. This was no easy task, as she had to travel from Hoxton, a distance of about three miles, leading two children, while her husband carried a third. Nor was this employment of the most pleasant description. The children frequently came so dirty, that the colour of their skins could scarcely be ascertained, while their clothes, in many cases, were filled with vermin. In course of time, however, their appearance was greatly improved, and cleanliness was made indispensably necessary to their continuance in the school.

On the approach of winter, the number of children gradually diminished, as most of them were unprovided with covering for the head and feet: those, however, who had been constant in their attendance, were clothed by Mr. C. to the best of his ability; and although, at this time, his income was considerable, yet he found it insufficient, consistently with the creditable maintenance of his family, to purchase so much apparel as was needed.

In the spring of 1799, finding the work too much for himself and his wife, especially as he was still obliged to attend the evening preaching at Tottenham, he applied to several persons for assistance, but in vain. He then went again to Mr. Wilson, and obtained another recommendatory letter, with which he repaired to the Itinerant Society; but the only answer he could obtain from the committee was, "that if they listened to his application, they would have as many Sunday-schools to attend to, as there were chandlers' shops in London." This was a painful answer, and filled his heart with sorrow. "Alas, poor Kent-street!" he involuntarily said to himself as he retired; "is there none to take thee by the hand?" He then went to the Rev. Rowland Hill; but he was unable to obtain gratuitous teachers for his own school at Surrey chapel. A few days afterwards, he waited upon the Rev. Mr. Knight; but no one in his congregation had courage sufficient to venture down the street. As a last resource, he went to his old and tried friend Mr. Burchett; who smiled at his disappointments, and told him to be of good cheer, for assistance was at hand.

It happened very providentially that Mr. Burchett had, that day, attended his friend Mr. Hugh Beams, of the Stock Exchange, to Surrey chapel, where Mr. Hill had mentioned the great benefits resulting from Sabbath-school instruction in Scotland; and, prompted, perhaps, by the entreaties of Mr. Cranfield, had made a most urgent and powerful appeal to his hearers, to come forward and assist in promoting similar objects in London. Mr. Burchett, on returning home with his friend, consulted with him on the manner in which they

might best engage in the work suggested by Mr. Hill. This subject was still occupying their attention, when Mr. Cranfield arrived at his friend's house. "Here," said Mr. Burchett, pointing to Mr. Beams, "is a man ready to assist you; and, in the mean time, I will undertake to discharge the next quarter's rent for the school."

The next Sabbath, Messrs. Burchett and Beams attended the Kent-street school, where they found Mr. and Mrs. C. busily engaged with about forty children. Mr. Burchett now inquired whether a larger number could not be brought together, if teachers could be obtained; when Mr. C. readily engaged to collect as many children as the other could supply with teachers. Both parties, therefore, went to work with spirit; and on the following Sunday, two more teachers, Messrs. Sims and Kirk, joined the school.

As "iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." This truth was never better exemplified than in the effect which this accession had upon the mind of Mr. Cranfield. Cheered and animated by the prospects before him, he proceeded with redoubled vigour in his arduous labours.

The Rev. G. Collison having, at his request, drawn up an address to the inhabitants of the district, Mr. Cranfield printed it, and circulated it through the neighbourhood. The address was as follows:—

"Kent-street Sunday-School.

"The daring impiety and extreme ignorance of the present age, among the lower orders of society, are truly afflicting; and the consequences

which must follow, if proper means be not adopted to counteract their influence, must be dreadful.

“Moved with sympathy and compassion towards the rising generation in and about Kent-street, a few friends voluntarily offer their service to instruct the poor children whose parents are incapable of paying for their education, and also those who, being employed during the remaining part of the week, have no time of their own but on Sunday. They have opened a Sunday-school at No. 124 Kent-street, without any emolument whatever to themselves, or expense to the parents of the children. The times for teaching, are from nine to half-past ten in the morning, being then conducted to a place of worship; and from two to five in the afternoon. It is hoped that the parents of such children will readily embrace this opportunity of obtaining instruction for them, and be particular in sending them at the appointed time. For the encouragement of those children who constantly and regularly attend, the girls will be presented with a bonnet, and the boys with a hat, on the 1st of August, 1799.”

It is needless to say that this address, accompanied, as it was, by such a promise of hats and bonnets, had its desired effect. Numbers of children flocked to the school, so that the room was too small for their accommodation. A larger one was, therefore, engaged at No. 226, in the same street. And now Mr. Cranfield began to be concerned about the performance of his promise. The children were all impatiently looking forward to the 1st of August, and delighting themselves with the pleasing thought of being decked in their

new attire. To disappoint them, under such circumstances, would be cruel. Mr. C., therefore, strenuously exerted himself for the fulfilment of his engagement; money was obtained; a quantity of "shambra" muslin bought; and Mrs. C., though otherwise much engaged, contrived by the appointed time to make the requisite number of neat cottage bonnets.

The long-expected day having arrived, the door was besieged with children long before the time for opening it. Their faces appeared unusually clean, and their countenances brightened up with the most joyous hopes. The new hats and bonnets were produced; and the feeling of delight which sparkled in every eye at the sight of them could only be equalled by the chagrin and vexation of those whose recent entrance, or irregular attendance, had not entitled them to such a reward.

On the following Sabbath, when the children had assembled in the street, for the purpose of proceeding to their accustomed place of worship, nearly the whole neighbourhood was out, to behold the pleasing sight; and most of the spectators had something to say respecting their neat and orderly appearance. Some condemned themselves for not having sent their children to the school, and all seemed persuaded that the alteration in the appearance of the scholars was for the better; and if they were not quite convinced of the blessings of education, they certainly thought it an advantage for their children to be thus decently clad. Mr. Cranfield surveyed the whole scene with unutterable satisfaction, and the delightful feelings which he experienced amply repaid him for all his trouble.

Before taking leave of this department of Mr Cranfield's labours, it will be proper to notice some instances, in which his exertions in the school were crowned with success.

It is, perhaps, not sufficiently considered by teachers, how great an amount of good may be accomplished among persons who are not immediately connected with their schools. How often have children carried home to their neighbours some striking fact which they have heard, or witnessed in the school! Thus some have had their curiosity awakened, and, being induced to attend the school themselves, for the purpose of listening to these pleasing details, the word has found an abiding-place in their hearts. How often, while the children have been repeating their proofs, catechisms, or hymns, to their parents, have the arrows of God stuck fast in their souls, leading them to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" And what pleasing instances have the histories of Sunday-schools furnished, of the conversion of sinners, who, attracted to the place by the singing of the children, have been thus brought under the sound of the gospel! A circumstance of the latter kind happened a few months after the opening of the school in Kent-street.

The landlady of the house where the school was held, being interested by the children's voices, as they sang the praises of God, was accustomed to sit on the stairs to listen, and there to remain during the time of the address. The word spoken seemed to make an impression on her mind: she became serious in her deportment, and soon afterwards, being taken ill, she sent for Mr. Cranfield, who visited her, and found her very ignorant of

God, and the way of salvation by Christ Jesus. But the Lord was pleased in a very short time to convince her of her need of a Saviour, and she was led to cry mightily for salvation. Her prayers were not in vain. The Lord manifested himself to her as he does not unto the world, and sent peace and comfort to her soul.

A few days after this, Mr. Hartnell was one afternoon addressing the children, when a lodger, occupying the second floor, sat himself down on the stairs opposite the school door. Mr. H., having looked at him attentively, thought that he knew him; and after the service, asked him if he did not come from the same town as himself. He answered in the affirmative, but that, being involved in debt, he sought refuge in that obscure part of London, thinking that he should not be found by his creditors. He was then very ill, and shortly afterwards was confined to his bed. Mr. C. and Mr. H. both visited him in his illness, and their exhortations were blessed to his soul. He soon began to comprehend the plan of salvation, and became grieved that he had not before sought after the one thing needful. As his weakness increased, his meetness for a participation in the joys of the redeemed before the throne became more manifest, and he died in peace.

The case of Mr. Archer, one of the parents, is worthy of notice. It being reported, by some ill-disposed persons, that the children were severely beaten at the chapel for not sitting still, he went to Mr. Knight's meeting-house in Collyer's Rents, in a wretchedly dirty state, in order to ascertain the fact; determined that, if Mr. C. should strike his child, he would inflict summary vengeance

upon him. He stayed during the whole of the service; and seeing that the children were not corrected in the manner reported, he went peaceably away. On the next Sabbath, however, he attended again in the same state, and with a similar design; but retired as before. He attended on the third Sabbath; when the Lord was pleased to arouse his conscience, and to enable him to see what a sinner he was. After this, accompanied by his wife, he waited upon Mr. Knight, and opened to him the state of his mind. Mr. K. received him with kindness, and, directing the anxious inquirer to Jesus, he explained to him the way of God more perfectly. He regularly attended the ministry of Mr. K., and became a humble follower of Christ till his death, which happened several years afterwards.

The account of Mary Turner, a child eleven years of age, whom Mr. and Mrs. C. met in the street, and invited to the school, is truly pleasing and affecting. She was attacked by an inflammation of the bowels about three weeks after she, with the other children, had received her new bonnet. An interesting account of this child was written by Mr. Cranfield, and published in the Evangelical Magazine for 1799. Mr. C. says—

“On the Friday night following the first attack of her disorder, she was heard to pray earnestly for mercy. Her father, on hearing her, arose, and asked what she meant, or who it was she asked to forgive her? ‘It is God I ask forgiveness of,’ replied little Mary. On being asked if she thought she was a sinner, she answered, ‘Yes, and I want God to forgive me, and have mercy on me.’ All the next day she continued in prayer

to Jesus Christ for mercy. After praying herself, she requested her father, also, to pray with her and soon after sung—

‘ How glorious is our heavenly King,
Who reigns above the sky !
How shall a child presume to sing
His awful majesty !’

“ After this, she testified her thankfulness to the good gentleman and lady, as she expressed it, that picked her up in the street, and brought her to the Sunday-school. Then turning to her brothers and sisters, she said, ‘ I beseech you by no means neglect the Sunday-school, for I have found benefit there, and so may you.’ She then requested her father to write a note to her teacher, and to let him know that she was sick.

“ Monday, 26th,” continues Mr. Cranfield, “ I visited her, and asked if she knew me? With a smile, she answered, ‘ Yes,’ and mentioned my name. The enemy of souls had this day buffeted her much. I asked what she thought of Jesus Christ as a Saviour. She said, ‘ I believe him to be the Saviour of sinners.’ ‘ And have you reason to believe Jesus died for you?’ After a pause, she said, ‘ I hope.’ I then began to interrogate her respecting her hope, but her pains returned with such violence, that she cried out, ‘ Dear Lord Jesus, help me.” Some time after she wrestled with God in prayer, and added, ‘ O precious Christ!’ She then sung—

‘ When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.’

“ Wednesday, 28th, she was taken to Guy’s

Hospital, where she suffered much on account of the behaviour of the women in the ward with her, whom she reproved, telling them that if they continued in that state they would surely go to hell.

"About eleven o'clock in the evening of the following day she said, 'O Lord Jesus, make my bed;' and then requested her mother, who had been permitted to remain with her, to turn her, and immediately after this she fell asleep, I trust, in the arms of Jesus. Thus died this dear child, in the eleventh year of her age."

She was interred in Collyer's Rents' burial-ground, at the expense of the teachers, four boys conveying her to the grave, six girls holding up the pall, followed by one hundred and thirty children. It is remarkable, that the Rev. Mr. Knight, in concluding his address at the grave, turned to Mr. Cranfield and said, "My earnest prayer to God for you is, that, as He has in a remarkable manner stirred you up in behalf of the rising generation, you may live to see our temples crowded with children, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" A prayer which was most happily fulfilled.

About this time, also, a sailor, a native of America, attracted by the singing of the children, stood at the school door to listen. The hymn they were singing was the following:—

"Soon as my infant lips can speak
Their feeble prayer to thee,
O let my heart thy favours seek!
Dear Lord, remember me."

The last line forcibly struck the mind of the weather-beaten seaman; the words followed him wherever he went; and from that time he regu-

larly attended the ministry of the word. He afterwards joined the Rev. J. Townsend's church, at Rotherhithe, declaring that he received his first religious impressions from the singing of that hymn by the children of Kent-street school.

Nor ought the case of a Mrs. Sawyer to be silently passed over. She had been invited, with the rest of the parents, to partake of a large cake procured for them and the children by the teachers. After the cake had been handed round, each drew a ticket with a passage of Scripture on it. And at the close of the service Mr. C. gave out the hymn—

“Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!
 Pilgrim through this barren land
 I am weak, but thou art mighty—
 Hold me with thy powerful hand.
 Bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more.”

Finding it sweet to his soul, he sang the last line three times over with great animation and fervour; and the Spirit of God accompanied them with power to the mind of the poor woman, so that she was made a partaker of that bread “of which if a man eat, he shall live for ever.” She lived for some time afterwards in the diligent use of the means of grace, and on her death-bed thanked God for the institution of the Sunday-school.

The last interesting circumstance which will be noticed in the present chapter, is the conversion of a little boy only eight years of age. A remark of Mr. Kirk, “Remember, children, that you are not too young to die,” powerfully riveted his attention, and produced in him a concern for the salvation of his soul. On the Wednesday fol

lowing, he was taken ill, and requested his father to send for Messrs. Kirk and Cranfield: but he, not apprehending that the child was in any danger, refused; and it was not till the child was dying, that the teachers were enabled to see him. The father then told them, in a very careless manner that the child had been saying he was a sinner and had been crying from morning till night "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me." To his mother he said, "I have had a view of that glorious place to which my brother is gone: oh, how I wish to be there also! Do not cry for me, mother; I am going to heaven; I shall be there before four o'clock." His words were fulfilled, for at two his happy spirit took its flight to the regions of eternal bliss.

Previous to some of the transactions which have just been detailed, Mr. Cranfield was called to act a principal part in the establishment of another school; an account of which will be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE OPENING OF THE MINT SCHOOL, TO THE
DEATH OF MR. NIXON.

IN May, 1799, Mr. Burchett, moved by the powerful pleading of the Rev. R. Hill on behalf of Sabbath-schools, and by the application of Mr. Cranfield for assistance, convened a meeting of his friends, at the Hoxton Academy chapel, with the view of raising annual subscriptions for defraying the expenses of the Kent-street school and devising means for supplying it with teachers. At this meeting only four persons attended; namely, Messrs. Burchett, Beams, Pound, and Cranfield. The subscriptions amounted to four guineas, and each engaged to contribute annually the sum he then had subscribed. After some consultation, Mr. Beams proposed that, as they had now more money than would be sufficient to meet the present exigencies, they should extend their operations, and open another school in the Mint, a district near Kent-street. Mr. C., astonished at the proposal, asked how it was possible to carry on a second school while their means were scarcely sufficient to supply the demands of the first; when Mr. B. quickly replied, "Cranfield, where is your faith?" This was enough; he

felt ashamed that so young a convert as Mr. Beams should display greater faith than himself, who had witnessed so much of the power of God, in overcoming opposition to the advancement of his cause. Instead, therefore, of any longer objecting to the plan, he seconded it; and Messrs. Beams and Cranfield were appointed to select a room in the most eligible situation.

The two friends, on traversing the neighbourhood, found it worse, if possible, than that of Kent-street. It abounded with filth and iniquity, was inhabited by persons of the worst description, and appeared to be a place where the prince of darkness had long held universal and undisputed sway. Not at all daunted, however, they hired a room in Queen-street, in the Mint, at four pounds per annum; and then personally waited upon the inhabitants, with a request that they would send their children for instruction.

On the morning of the 16th June, 1799, a most animating scene presented itself. The place was thronged with parents anxious to get their children admitted, and the first day more than forty were entered. Messrs. Cranfield, Beams, and Wills (a fresh labourer) were here actively employed all that Sabbath; while Messrs. Burchett and Kirk, with some other friends, took care of Kent-street school. The children appeared in a most wretched condition, few of them wearing shoes, and scarcely more than two or three having any covering to their heads.

It is not to be supposed that this work was accomplished without strong opposition. Satan had here too long wielded his sceptre, to allow it to be wrested from his grasp without a struggle; and

accordingly the teachers were reviled, insulted, and pelted with mud. Stones were sometimes thrown into the school, the windows broken, and all sorts of disturbances created ; but these devoted men kept the even tenor of their way—insults and annoyances only serving to cement their union, and to increase their fervour and boldness at the throne of grace. Having put their hands to the plough, they never, for one moment, looked back but in breaking up the fallow-ground, they advanced with an energy that defied every opposition, and a spirit that rose above every obstacle.

Nor was the work permitted to stand still for want of hands : the Lord of the harvest, ever mindful of his own cause, in answer to prayer raised up more faithful labourers, and the work proceeded prosperously. On the following Sabbath, Mr. Beams prevailed on Mr. Nixon to join the little band ; and he proved a valuable acquisition. Another important addition was shortly after effected by obtaining the services of Mrs. Williams, female teachers being much wanted, and hitherto no one, except Mrs. Cranfield, having been prevailed upon to venture into these abandoned neighbourhoods. Mr. C., being thus provided with assistance, devoted the greater portion of his time to the superintendence of Kent-street school, while Messrs. Beams, Nixon, and Wills, were engaged at the Mint.

The female teachers were found to be most useful. Mrs. Williams was an experienced and well-qualified teacher. Her services were most beneficial. Just in proportion to her spiritual success, was the deep humility of her character. "Nothing," she remarked on one occasion, "hum-

bles me so completely in the dust before God, as the knowledge that such an instrument has been permitted to lead a poor sinner to the Redeemer." These humble and self-denying labourers are sure to be the most successful. He that humbleth himself shall be greatly exalted before God.

In the latter end of July, 1799, a proposition was made to the teachers, by Mr. Wills, to open a school in Gravel-lane, situated on the north west border of the Mint, and, at that time, presenting a scene of wretchedness which almost equalled that of the Mint. The proposition was acceded to; and Mr. Cranfield, accompanied by Messrs. Wills and Beams, hired a garret at No. 20 Old Gravel-lane, and early in the following month it was opened for a school. Here Mr. Sims chiefly laboured on the Sabbath, until his death, assisted by Messrs. Payne, Doxsey, and others.

About this time, also, Mr. Cranfield assisted Mr. Burchett in opening a school in Garden-row, St. George's Fields, a place where such scenes of iniquity were continually witnessed, that the Rev. Mr. Berridge used to term it the "Devil's territory." This school was afterwards removed to a room near the King's Bench prison, and was called the Debtors' school. Here Mr. C. laboured during a portion of every Sabbath. Originally, the teachers were not confined to any particular school, but, acting together as one body, each went where his services were most required.

Oh, how delightful was the union that existed among these devoted servants of the Lord! How admirably did they fulfil the Divine command, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with bro-

herly love ; in honour preferring one another !” These happy times were seldom referred to by Mr. Cranfield, in his latter days, without tears, accompanied by the heart-inspiring quotation from the psalmist, “ Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !”

In the autumn of 1799, Messrs. Burchett, Beams, Nixon, and Cranfield, waited on the Rev. Rowland Hill, and related their progress, requesting him, at the same time, to take those schools under his protection, and unite the whole, in conjunction with his school at Surrey chapel, into one society. This was readily agreed to by Mr. Hill, and a meeting was appointed to take place for that purpose.

Accordingly, the friends met at Surrey chapel, on September 12th, 1799, when a society was formed, called the “ Surrey Chapel Sunday-school Society,” afterwards denominated, “ The Southwark Sunday-school Society.”

Soon after the opening of the school in Gravel-lane, a meeting was held for prayer and Christian conversation every Monday evening, to which the neighbours were invited ; and at these meetings much good was effected. One circumstance ought not to be silently passed over. An old woman, aged seventy-five, came in one evening, when the friends were discoursing upon the subject of the corruption of human nature. The conversation, accompanied by the teaching of the Divine Spirit, convinced her that she was an unpardoned sinner. During the week she was taken ill, and one of the teachers was sent for. Mr. Wills, accordingly, waited on her, when she addressed him thus :—

"Sir, when I came first up to your garret, I heard a good gentleman speak such things as I never heard before; I felt as if I was about to drop into hell; my knees knocked together. Oh, sir, I am the vilest wretch that ever lived." After some conversation with her, Mr. Wills left, and called on Mr. Cranfield, who also visited her, when an interesting conversation ensued, of which the following may be given as a brief outline:—

"How do you find yourself?"

Woman.—Oh, very low, sir.

Mr. C.—Do you mean respecting your body or mind?

W.—Oh, my mind, sir! I am a sinner; yes, a great sinner; indeed I am. I have been a sinner for these seventy-five years, and never feared God in all my life.

Mr. C.—Can you read?

W.—No, sir, I wish I could. When I was young, there were no schools for teaching poor folks' children, as there are now.

Mr. C.—My good woman——

W.—Dear me, sir, do not call me good; I am the vilest creature that ever lived. If you did but know what I feel, you would have no good thoughts of me.

Mr. C.—Well, then, I will consider you to be a very bad woman—one of the worst of sinners—

W.—That you may very safely say, sir.

Mr. C.—Well, though you are an old grey-headed sinner, though your sins be as scarlet, and red like crimson, the Bible tells me they shall be as snow.

W. (interrupting)—But does it say so of old sinners such as I am?

Mr. C.—God has no respect of persons ; and all the promises are made equally to the old and to the young. Mr. C. then mentioned several examples of God's mercy to aged sinners, and showed her, that when the Spirit of truth comes into the heart, it convinces the sinner of sin. He then proceeded to describe the nature of sin, and to show how it corrupted all the powers and faculties of the soul ; when the poor woman, looking at him with surprise, said, " Why, sir, who told you this of me ? Now, I will tell you the whole truth. You must know that when I came up to your meeting, I thought I was as good as any of you : I went to church every Sunday, and I thought that God would save me at last. I was not then troubled about my sins, as I am now. Well, sir, do you know, that while you were speaking about sin, I was stabbed to the heart : I trembled all over ; my knees shook. Oh, sir, you would not believe what a state I was in. I was afraid to go to bed, lest I should wake up in hell ; and I have been unhappy ever since."

After directing her to the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone could save her, Mr. C. departed, but visited her, however, several times afterwards ; and on the day previous to her death, she said to him, " Last night the tempter told me that God would have nothing to do with me, and that it was too late to think of calling upon him. "Well," said I, 'if I am cast out, it is no more than I deserve ; but still I will trust in the Lord.' Soon after this, I felt great love to Christ, and recollected his words, 'I give eternal life.' " Mr. C. then asked her what were her views of Christ ? To which she answered, "Why, sir, you know that I am very ignorant

but I will tell you as well as I can—I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he came from heaven to die for sinners such as I am; though I did not think so at first, when you visited me; but now I find my mind gives way in love to him. Yes, I do love him. Oh, dear sir, what should I do without him? He is every thing to me.” She then wept bitterly; but, after a pause, she continued: “Blessed be my dear Jesus for having looked on such a vile sinner as I am, and taken my cause into his own dear hands. And does he say, ‘Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am?’ Then come, dear Lord Jesus, and carry me home.” The next day she died, rejoicing in God her Saviour, and triumphing over death through the blood of the cross.

About this period, Mr. Cranfield was requested to assist Mr. Burchett in opening a school in Rosemary-lane; which being accomplished, and placed under the care of suitable persons, Mr. B. directed his whole attention to the schools in Southwark, in which scholars were rapidly increasing.

In March, 1800, the Rev. Mr. Moseley, from Scotland, formerly a student in Hoxton Academy, visited Mr. C., and explained to him the method of imparting religious instruction on Sabbath evenings at Glasgow. The plan was as follows:—

Those children of the Bible and Testament classes, who were more than eight years of age, were assembled at six o’clock on Sabbath evening. The service was commenced in the usual way, with singing, reading, and prayer. The scholars were then catechised respecting their knowledge of the

sermon they had heard in the morning. Each child then repeated the question in the Catechism appointed for the evening's subject, with proofs from the Old and New Testaments, when a series of questions were put for further elucidation of the subject. A short and animated address was then given, and the meeting closed with singing and prayer.

Mr. C. perceiving the good effects that were likely to result from the adoption of such a plan, entered into it with his usual ardour and alacrity, though it was attended with great sacrifice of time ; for, independent of the whole Sabbath evening being occupied, the question and the answer in the Catechism were obliged to be written for each child, there being then no books published in a cheap form for the young, as in the present day. He saw that this would be an admirable method of sending the gospel home to the parents and neighbours ; that the children, for the most part, not being able to make out the writing themselves, would repair to those who could ; and thus, those who never came out to hear the word, would have it brought home to their own houses.

He was not deceived in his expectations, for a remarkable circumstance of this kind happened soon after the commencement of the evening instruction. A little girl, named Venables, took home a paper upon the subject of regeneration, and, upon repeating the passage in John iii., "Ye must be born again," she asked her mother what it meant ? This question the mother could not answer ; but it fixed her attention. Wherever she went, the words, "Ye must be born again," seemed to sound in her ears. She began to feel

that something was wanting as a preparation for heaven, and she therefore obtained what religious books she could from her friends, in order, as she said, that she might be enabled to make her peace with God. This poor woman had for a long time been in a declining state of health; and in the summer of 1800, being much worse, she sent for Mr. Cranfield to visit her, who, with Messrs. Wills and Nixon, saw her frequently. Her memoir was written by Mr. Nixon, and afterwards published in the Evangelical Magazine for 1800. Her dying testimony is thus related by Mr. N.

“About six weeks before she died, she was greatly recovered, and was enabled to go down stairs. Mr. Cranfield called upon her at this time, and was surprised to see her so much better. ‘Ah, friend,’ said she, ‘you see the Lord has brought me into the world again. I was in hopes I should have been in heaven before now; but his will be done. I hope I shall have strength to stand in the heat of the battle, till he take me off the field.’ She continued down stairs for near a month, but her disorder returned again so violently and suddenly, that it was with difficulty she could get up again. The prospect of the joys of heaven was a constant feast to her mind, and rendered her extreme sufferings in the body the happiest portion of her life. She frequently repeated those promises which spoke of the Lord as a kind Shepherd to his people. Her thoughts dwelt much upon the sufferings of Christ; and she would often say, ‘What are all my pains and sufferings, however great, when compared with those of my dear Lord? A friend asked her if she was not afraid of the pains of death? She answered

that death was a welcome messenger to her ; she longed for it day and night.' Another friend said, 'I think you are much altered for the worse.' She replied, 'I think I am much altered for the better, for I shall soon be gone.' On the morning of the day she died, the sun shone very beautifully, and she desired the window-shutter to be opened, and said, 'Soon I shall behold the Sun of righteousness, whom I shall see for myself, and not another.' In the evening, a friend came, and informed me she was dying. I immediately went and asked her how she did : 'Oh,' said she, 'I am very weak, but I am waiting for my blessed Redeemer !' I promised to be with her again about nine, when I waited upon her, and found her almost incapable of speaking. She was asked if she could bear to hear me pray ? She said, 'I might say what I had to say to the family, and then pray that she might have a speedy dissolution.' And when I was at prayer, the pains of death came upon her : her lips seemed to move much ; but the last words that could be distinctly heard were, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ;' and in a few minutes after, her soul took its flight to the blessed Jesus, whom she ardently loved and longed for during the short period of her spiritual warfare.

Soon after this, Mr. C. was requested to attend the death-bed of a little boy, named Hopper, who was affected with small-pox. This child had attended the evening instruction, and was brought to the knowledge of the truth through the powerful addresses of Mr. C. The sufferings of this child were very short, so that the friends had but little opportunity of seeing him. Much of his time

was occupied in prayer, and he died while engaged in that holy exercise.

Mr. C. having now witnessed the beneficial results of evening instruction, became extremely anxious for its adoption in all the schools with which he was acquainted. For this purpose he wrote letters to all his friends engaged in Sunday school labours, giving them a description of the plan, and offering to assist them in introducing it.

The exertions of Mr. Cranfield at this time in the cause of Christ were very great. The following memoranda, in his own handwriting, will furnish a specimen of his extraordinary labours.

“January 25, 1801.—Set out for Croydon, to assist in imparting religious instruction to the Sunday-school instituted in that place.

“February 1st.—Attended the Mint school in the morning; then at the Debtors’ school; opened the Mint in the afternoon, then attended at Kent-street; and in the evening again at the Mint.

“July 8th.—Went to the Mint in the morning; took the children to chapel; went at eleven o’clock to the Debtor’s school; returned home to Hoxton to dinner. In the afternoon and evening attended again at the Mint. Monday evening, visited the Mint; gave out the subjects to the children on slips of paper, not being in possession of catechisms. Wednesday, attended the Gravel-lane school. Friday, again at the Mint.

“Sunday, 15th.—Attended at the Mint and Debtors’ schools in the morning; in the afternoon, opened the school at the Mint; then attended at Kent-street. In the evening went to Croydon, and superintended the service there, and conducted a prayer-meeting till nine o’clock. Monday, re

turned home in the morning in time for business in the evening attended the Mint-school, and visited some of the sick parents and neighbours.

“Sunday, 22d.—Attended, morning and afternoon, at the Mint and Debtors’ schools; evening at the school in Rosemary-lane.

“March 1st.—Took the children to Mr Knight’s; preached at the Debtor’s school; returned to Hoxton to dinner. In the afternoon again at the Mint; preached in the evening at Tottenham, and returned home to Hoxton.”

Great as were these labours, Mr. C., nevertheless, felt uneasy that he was not able, on account of the distance of his residence, to do more. After much conversation, therefore, with his wife upon the subject, it was determined that they should remove to Southwark, within a short distance of the sphere of their labours. Accordingly, in the summer of 1801, they took up their abode in Bermondsey street, when fresh plans were projected for more extensive usefulness, by a regular visitation of the parents of the children belonging to the Mint and Kent-street schools.

But the Lord, in his wise arrangements, thought fit for a season to frustrate the benevolent intentions of his servant, by laying him upon a sick bed. Here he was confined for several weeks by a violent attack of brain fever, and was at one time given over by his physician. His afflicted family stood weeping around him, expecting every moment that his soul would take its flight to the unseen world; but when anxiety was at its climax, he suddenly opened his eyes, and calmly asked for some refreshment. It was evident that his reason, which had been long suspended, had re

turned, and hopes were again entertained of his recovery. Meetings for prayer were frequently, during this time, held by his friends on his behalf; and the Lord heard and answered their supplications, by enabling him again, after the lapse of three months, to unite with them in their work and labour of love.

This temporary suspension of the labours of Mr. C. did not, however, impede the progress of the gospel among the poor. Another appeal was made at Surrey chapel; in answer to which no less than twenty-four persons came forward, and rallied round the standard which appeared about to fall from the grasp of its intrepid bearer. Of this circumstance Mr. Wills informed him soon after the turn of his disorder, which called forth from him expressions of gratitude and praise to God, who had not only supported him and his family under his trials, but had made the temporary loss of one labourer the means of a twenty-four-fold gain. In the November following, a son was born to him, whom he named Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

In consequence of this addition of labourers, Mr. C. had now more time for carrying into operation a plan which he had long contemplated, for the relief of working-men in times of sickness and infirmity, in order to save them from actual want, or a parish poor-house. In his visitations of the sick, he had frequently seen whole families, which had been previously in circumstances of comparative respectability, suddenly reduced to deep poverty and distress, through the visitation of Divine providence upon their master and head. He considered that societies might be formed of

industrious mechanics, who, from small monthly contributions, might afford ample relief to each other in cases of necessity. Some such societies were already in existence, but were founded upon so precarious a basis, that they furnished no security to members for the fulfilment of their engagements. Correct data, were, however, wanted, upon which to construct a table of contributions and benefits; but, as this could not be obtained, he calculated, as well as he could by means of his visits to the poor, the average number of sick mechanics in every hundred; and thus was enabled to ascertain that a contribution of from two shillings to two shillings and sixpence monthly, would, under certain regulations, afford an allowance to sick members of from fifteen shillings to one pound per week, besides a liberal allowance for their funeral in case of their decease.

Having submitted his plan to Mr. Burchett, he went diligently to work, and established these societies in Enfield, Edmonton, Tottenham, Hornsey, Brentford, Walworth, and several parts of London. Many of these societies are still in a flourishing state, and some were superintended by him until a short time previous to his death, when increasing age and infirmity compelled him to relinquish the office.

But the welfare of the souls of men was his principal object; for them he laboured with all the energy which his robust constitution was capable of sustaining. He was in the Mint and about Kent-street three or four evenings in the week, relieving the sick, directing the inquiring, encouraging the wavering, and reproving vice and immorality. On the Sabbath he would sometimes

take his stand in Mint-square, near to the school, and there reprove the vices of the inhabitants, and entreat them to flee from the wrath to come, by laying hold of the only hope set before them in the gospel.

At this time, Mr. C. had become pretty well known in the neighbourhood of the Mint, and was seldom offered any personal insult, although twice he was robbed of his watch, and had lost handkerchiefs almost without number. Mrs. C. was in continual alarm for his safety, especially in the winter season, and used often to tell him that she expected he would be brought home some night a lifeless corpse; but he would smile at her fears, and say that the Lord knew full well how to protect his servants while engaged in his work.

The whole of the capabilities of Mr. Cranfield, both of body and mind, appear at this time to have been exerted in promoting the welfare of his species. No season found him unemployed. If indisposition confined him to the limits of the sick-chamber, he would send for some of the Sunday-school children, that he might there unfold to them the mysteries of redeeming love, and set them portions of Scripture to learn, for their edification and improvement. He was employed, in season and out of season, in winning souls to Christ, and thought no personal sacrifice too great for the attainment of this one great object.

In all his duties and engagements, he found in his wife an able counsellor and a steady and devoted assistant. Her amiable temper and sweet disposition, combined with her sagacity, prudence, and piety, rendered her pre-eminently successful in engaging the affections of the children, while

imparting to them the knowledge of a Saviour's love. In the winter of 1801 she commenced the practice of having some of the scholars to a hot dinner on the Sabbath : three or four of them were taken home with Mr. C. after morning worship. The children, whose good behaviour entitled them to this distinction, were informed of the circumstance on the previous Sabbath ; and their anxious looks and inquiries to ascertain who were the fortunate individuals that their teacher delighted thus to honour, showed that they held this privilege in no little estimation. Many of the children have, indeed, declared that they never knew what it was to partake of a joint of meat except on these happy occasions.

Such opportunities of doing good to her youthful charge, were never suffered to escape by Mrs. C. unimproved. Before they returned to the school in the afternoon, she would give them most excellent advice respecting their conduct in the world, explain to them the snares and temptations which they would, in all probability, be called to pass through, and point them to that God who has promised to be their help and support in the time of trial. Nor did she stop here ; such girls as had distinguished themselves by their regular attendance at school, and attention to the instruction given, she would, at a suitable age, take under her roof, place them under her servant, to be instructed in household work, and then endeavour to provide them with situations in respectable families. The amount of good that was accomplished in this way is incalculable ; nor will it ever be fully ascertained until that day, when the Son of man shall come in his glory, with his

angels, and reward every man according to his deeds.

For the period of six years, the friends at the various schools continued to labour together in the utmost harmony and friendship. Among these devoted individuals there were no struggles for pre-eminence; no petty jealousies; no desires of "vain glory, provoking one another, and envying one another;" but, "each esteeming other better than himself," he was contented to occupy just that station where it appeared to the rest his efforts might be most usefully employed. This delightful union of heart and hand was not interrupted until October, 1805, when death began the work of separation, by removing Mr. Nixon, who had taken so prominent a part in the work of gathering lambs to the fold of Christ. Transient as was the course of this benefactor of his race, it exhibited incidents of the most affecting and instructive character, which, if detailed, would furnish an interesting narrative. In an animating address which he delivered to his fellow-teachers at the annual meeting in May, 1804, he concluded with these remarkable words: "When my head is laid in the silent grave, I wish no greater honour than that it should be said, 'Here lies a friend of children.'"

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE DEATH OF MR. CRANFIELD'S PARENTS, TO THE
DEATH OF HIS YOUNGEST SON.

SHORTLY after the death of Mr. Nixon, Mr. Cranfield was summoned to attend the dying bed of his venerable father, who was afflicted with the dropsy. In a letter which he wrote to his aged parent's pastor, informing him of his decease, he states, "A short time before his death, when my mother was dressing his foot, he lifted it up to look at it, and saw that a mortification had taken place. Then, clasping his hands, he said, 'Blessed be God, I am almost at home. Thanks be to His holy name, I shall not be long from my Father's house :

' Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly !'

"On the morning previous to his decease, a great change having taken place, I was called up at half-past three o'clock. When I came to his bed-side, he was asked if he knew me? He answered, 'Yes : it is my dear son.' My mother then asked, 'Do you know me?' to which he replied, 'Yes, I know you, and I know my dearest, sweetest Redeemer.' He then requested me

to pray with him; and when I had concluded, he took a most affectionate farewell of me, adding—

‘When you hear my heart-strings break,
How sweet the minutes roll!
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
And glory in my soul.’

“In the evening, he called for a candle, the light of which he could not before endure. When it was placed before him, he said, ‘Behold a dying saint; look at me, and see what sin has done. Sin is the cause of all my pain. My dear friends, do you love the Lord Jesus? Do you know him? I ask you individually, Do you know him? If so, what has he done for you? What evidence have you that he is your Saviour? If you know that he died for you, what have you done for him? Oh, believe on his precious name. You must, if you would die happy. I can say no more. May the Lord bless you all. And my dear wife, I commend her into the hand of God, from whom I received her. The Lord bless my dear son, and may he have grace to bring up his children in the fear of God, and follow me as far as I have followed Christ. I have done with the world now.’ He spoke but little after this. His remaining moments were spent in prayer for strength to hold out, for his wife, for the ministers of God, for you, and for the church over which you are placed. In this exercise he breathed his last, and passed into eternity.”

After the death of his father, Mr. C. resided at his house in Hightimber-street, and took care of his mother, whom he watched over with the fondest attention and solicitude until her death, which

nappened shortly afterwards, when he removed to Tooley-street.

In the year 1806, Mr. Cranfield revisited Tottenham, at the request of Mr. Burchett, to ascertain how the infant cause was advancing. Having reported to Mr. B. that it was in a low condition, he was requested by that indefatigable servant of Christ to open a school about a mile and a half farther on, which he did, and having attended it six Sabbaths, he resigned it into other hands, returning to his old sphere of labour in Southwark. This produced a spirit of revival in that part, so that the example was followed by other Christians, and new schools were established in seven other places.

In June, 1806, Mr. Cranfield was conversing with Mr. Charles Doxsey on the utility of Sunday-schools, when mention was made of the profanation of the Sabbath which was constantly exhibited on Kennington Common; and it was thought that this would be a desirable spot for the introduction of the gospel, by the opening of a school. They, therefore, took an early opportunity of visiting the neighbourhood, and waited on the Rev. Mr. Povah, minister of Kennington chapel, who received them favourably, gave them great encouragement, and kindly granted them the use of the vestry until they could procure a more convenient place for imparting instruction.

On the following Sabbath morning, they visited the inhabitants; and, after much exertion, succeeded in obtaining eleven scholars, whom they brought with them to the school, and received the promise of a greater number for the afternoon. Before two o'clock, therefore, the friends were

again at their post, and, to their great satisfaction the scholars amounted to fifty. They took every opportunity of canvassing the neighbourhood, and soon had so many children that the vestry was too small for their accommodation. They again applied to the Rev. Mr. P., and he allowed them the use of the chapel, and assisted them as often as his health would permit, by giving addresses to the children. They received also the valuable aid of Messrs. Beams and Burchett.

After some time, it was thought advisable to form a society for the support of the school, and it was, therefore, announced from the pulpit that a meeting would be held in the vestry on the following Monday evening, at seven o'clock, for this purpose. This meeting was attended by a great number of the congregation. A committee was appointed, and the sum of fifteen pounds collected. Mr. C. having now accomplished his object of establishing this school, left it under the superintendence of Mr. Doxsey, and retired again to his old sphere of labour. Occasionally, however, he visited the school, and was rejoiced to find the work of the Lord greatly prospering there.

About July, 1809, a room was taken in Kennington-lane, and was fitted up at the cost of £170; on which occasion, the Rev. Thomas Spencer* (who was afterwards drowned at Liverpool) preached an appropriate sermon, from the text, "What think ye of Christ?" The labours of the teachers were here remarkably blessed, to the conversion of many children; a number of whom are now teachers of Sabbath-schools; and a few are eminent and de-

*An interesting memoir of this remarkable man is published by the American Sunday school Union.

voted ministers of the gospel. In 1831, the old school was pulled down, and a larger one built; on the opening of which, the Rev. Rowland Hill preached to a crowded congregation.

Some time after the establishment of this school, Mr. Cranfield was greatly encouraged by meeting a young female, who accosted him in the street, and said, "O sir, I have been a very great sinner, for I was a Sabbath-breaker, and used to indulge on that day in all manner of rioting on the Common, till your school was opened, when I was among the first that attended; and I can truly say, that the instruction I there received has, by the blessing of God, been the means of saving me from ruin."

Nor was this the only fruit of his labours in this school that he was permitted to witness. In the year 1809, when a general jubilee took place, in consequence of King George the Third having entered the fiftieth year of his reign, Mr. Cranfield being at Kennington Sunday-school, offered a reward of a Bible to any boy that would find out the number of years each of the Kings of Judah reigned, and repeat it to him on a given day. This was done by one of the scholars much to his satisfaction, and the Bible was presented to him. Some years passed away, the circumstance being forgotten by Mr. C., when one day, visiting Prospect-place school, (one of the schools connected with Surrey chapel,) a teacher came up to him, and said, "Mr. Cranfield, do you remember giving a Bible to a boy at the Kennington Sunday-school, for informing you the time each King of Judah reigned?" After some consideration, Mr. C. replied that he did. "Well, sir," said the teacher,

“I am the person, and I have the Bible now: I bless God that you put it into my hands, for it has been the means, with other circumstances, of bringing me to a knowledge of the truth.”

Hitherto Mr. Cranfield had continued a superintendent of Kent-street school, although he was much engaged in promoting the cause of instruction in other places; but he now resigned that office, and devoted his attention chiefly to the Mint school, which was then under the especial direction of Mr. Burchett. A large school was afterwards built by the society in Kent-street, the foundation-stone of which was laid by the Rev. Rowland Hill, and at the death of Mr. Cranfield, this school contained upwards of 500 children.

In 1807, Mr. Burchett having removed to Kentish Town, discontinued his labours in the Mint, and opened another school near his new residence. Upon accepting this resignation, the teachers chose Mr. Cranfield for their superintendent.

Before the close of the year 1807, being anxious to ascertain what advantages had resulted from the instruction imparted in the Mint school, Mr. C. convened a meeting of the old scholars, at which several attended, and reported the benefit they had derived from the religious instruction imparted.

Some of Mr. C.'s friends, however, did not approve of this meeting; and he was compared to a child digging up the seed newly sown, to ascertain if it had taken root. Nothing intimidated by this sarcasm, he prevailed on his fellow-labourers at Gravel-lane school, to hold a similar meeting at that place; and there, also, it was perceived that

the Lord had greatly honoured his servants, and had made them instrumental in the conversion of many souls. Speaking of this meeting some time afterwards, in a letter to a friend, he says, "In the year 1807, I witnessed a sight in Gravel-lane school, which would have been a treat for an angel. Brother Sims collected the old scholars, and I counted between twenty and thirty souls, who ascribed their conversion to the instruction they had received principally from him and Payne. There are, at this very time, some of the old scholars teaching in different schools at the west end of the town. Several are in Mr. Wesley's connexion, in Southwark; one is a member of Surrey chapel, and another is preaching the gospel in the country." Mr. Cranfield appears to have been the first projector of old scholars' meetings, which have been the means of many revivals in Sabbath-schools, and of conferring lasting benefits on the church and on the world.

On the 15th of June, 1808, being the anniversary of the opening of the school in the Mint, he held his second meeting of old scholars. The proceedings of this meeting he detailed in the following letter to the Committee of the Southwark Sunday-school Society:—

"GENTLEMEN,

"From a sense of respect which is due to you, as well as for the encouragement of the teachers, I have taken the liberty of informing you of the second meeting of old scholars, held at the Mint school, on the 15th of June, 1808. A few days previous to the meeting, a circular letter was addressed to them, requesting their company to tea

for Christian conversation. The meeting commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon, and was attended by a considerable number of young persons, most of whom were at service. Some were married, and brought their children; and many were present, of whom we should most likely have never seen or heard, were it not for this meeting, which was called together to ascertain how far the religious instruction imparted at the school had influenced their minds and conduct since they had left. The joy they seemed to experience in beholding each other again in the flesh, was truly gratifying. After inquiring after each other's welfare, and a little conversation on by-gone days, which occupied the time till four o'clock, tea was introduced; and this being over, the service commenced with singing, reading, and prayer. I then gave a short prefatory address, explaining the object of the meeting, and afterwards interrogated them individually. 'Elizabeth,' said I, to the first, 'what effect has the instruction you received at the school had upon your mind?' After a short pause, she answered, 'I was recommended by one of the teachers to a situation as a nursery-maid; and it has been my constant practice, at all seasonable times, especially on the Sabbath, to collect the children of the family, and catechise them after the manner of the school.' This statement was subsequently confirmed by the lady of the house, who considered her a pious person. I then addressed her by way of encouragement, and called upon another in a similar manner. She, poor creature, burst into tears, and, with a melting heart, spoke of the repeated opportunities she had been favoured

with, but, like many, had failed to improve them. The concern of the world, and its deceptions, had enticed away her mind from the best things. She attended, with her husband, on the means of grace, and was very thankful for the instruction she had received; for she could not tell a letter when she entered the school, but now could both read and write. After a suitable exhortation to her, I called upon another. This young woman had passed through many trials, and had had three children, one of whom was then an infant. She had a lively sense of the evil of sin, and the corruption of her heart; she knew perfectly the way of salvation by Christ; but seemed to possess little of the comfort of it in her soul. She said that her desire was to love the Lord with all her heart, and that it was the prevailing wish of her soul to be conformed to his image. She attended the preaching at Mr. Knight's, and the weekly prayer-meeting in Kent-street.

“The next person had likewise an infant in arms. She gave a very pleasing account of her conversion to God by means of a female teacher, whose practice it was, when her class came up to read, to speak to the children about the Saviour.

“The fifth was a decent married female, and with great modesty she gave us an account of her experience, and a most scriptural and spiritual one it was. I had not heard so gratifying a one for some time. The work of grace was begun when at school, and increased by her attendance at several prayer-meetings with other pious young women. She gave us an account of a number of passages of Scripture which the Lord had applied to her mind when under conflicts and temptations,

and closed with an expression of gratitude for the instruction she had received; for she, likewise, did not know a letter of the alphabet when she entered the school. Were I to give you a full account of this person, which time will not allow, you would say, ‘Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?’

“The experience of the last person was the means of producing conviction in another, who cried out, with agony of mind, and bitter weeping, that she had once enjoyed the comforts of religion, and had been enabled to say, that an hour spent in the service of the Lord, was better than a thousand spent in sin; but she had backslidden from God, and had given up her mind to things which did not profit. ‘Oh,’ said she, ‘what would I give if my experience was like that of my school-fellows!’ She then seized me by the hand, and said, ‘O, sir, do, do, do pray for me!’

“After having complied with her request, and her excited feelings were somewhat allayed, I called upon the next, who gave us a pleasing account of her change of heart, through the instruction she had received at the school, and informed us that she had joined the church under Mr. Knight.

“I then called upon the next, who, in broken accents, gave us an interesting account of her conversion, through the instrumentality of another female teacher.

“Here, sirs, I lost all fortitude: I could go on no further: for I was overcome with astonishment to hear these young persons speaking of the wonderful things of God. And I then called on

brother Sims and Wortham to go on with the service.

“Brother Wortham stood up, and said, that he had often been discouraged, insomuch that he thought of leaving the school; but now he was surrounded with encouragements, and, by the strength of the Lord, he would persevere. He then gave out a hymn, and addressed them from Deut. viii. 2, 3. It was then thought advisable to close the meeting; which being done, some retired, but many lingered, loth to depart; and it was ten o’clock before the room was entirely cleared.

“Such another day I never expect to witness. I have here given you but a very faint and brief account of the meeting; my time and abilities will not suffer me to do more. There were others present who, I have every reason to believe, were subjects of Divine grace. Upon the whole, I am fully satisfied that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

At this meeting of old scholars, it was ascertained that no less than fourteen of those present were members of churches, and that there was scarcely one who did not attend a place of worship. These meetings have since been held annually, and none have passed without fresh specimens having been produced of the glorious fruits of righteousness, to the praise, and honour, and glory of God, from the seed scattered in this unpromising soil.*

In reference to those interesting services with

* These meetings are now held annually, in all the schools of the Southwark Society.

the old scholars, one of Mr. Cranfield's friends writes—

“At these meetings Cranfield appeared to be as happy as he could be in this world. His whole soul was engaged in the scene. He sung, he talked, he wept, he nursed the little ones, and appeared absorbed in the delightful object. On one of these happy occasions he invited me to preside. On reaching the place I found all the arrangements complete. The old scholars had arrived; the room was adorned with evergreens; and here and there you beheld some cucumbers, which appeared to excite no ordinary curiosity. After the party had taken a cup of tea together, and engaged in devotional exercises, I was requested to deliver an address suitable to the occasion. During this part of the service, many of the mothers found it extremely difficult to keep their little ones in order. It was pleasing to see the venerable Cranfield moving quietly about, nursing one and then another of the little troublers; when he found that his skill did not succeed in quieting his little friends, he had recourse to innocent bribery, and produced the sugar-plum, and caraway comfit, which he carried in considerable quantities in his waistcoat pocket. After the address, the worthy man called upon his friends to furnish any information which might be useful and encouraging. It was truly interesting to see him listening to the narratives that were furnished. He was taken back to the early years of his labours, and the grandfather told of the beneficial instructions he had listened to in the school. Others told of their temptations, their afflictions, their difficulties. The females

anded in letters, containing evidence that ‘the bread which had been cast on the waters had been found again, though after many days.’ Then followed the kind addresses of former teachers, and now and then the venerable man uttered the warm feelings of an overflowing heart, assuring his old pupils, that ‘his heart’s desire and prayer to God for them was, that they all might be saved.’ These services were peculiarly profitable, and tended to awaken in the persons present a sense of the value of the instructions they had formerly received; the lukewarm were revived, the wanderers were checked in their course, and the humble disciple was encouraged to go on his way rejoicing.

“The meeting thus described was a fair sample of many anniversaries of the old scholars. After the services were over, and the chairman was about to leave, he received the present of a remarkably fine cucumber, as a small but sincere acknowledgment of his kind services; after which each of the old scholars received a similar token of the old man’s affection. No cucumber was ever so sweet as this! On these occasions there was frequently some trivial present—a few flowers, a cake, a little fruit—some trifling memorial of the unabated attachment of the venerable teacher to the objects of his former solicitude. How great is the luxury of being kind and doing good to others!”

Mr. C., thus encouraged by his old scholars’ meetings, went forward with fresh vigour, projected new plans of improvement, stirred up his friends to bring more labourers into the harvest, and employed himself, both on the Sabbath and

FROM THE DEATH OF HIS PARENTS

week-days, in seeking after precious souls, for the purpose of bringing them under the sound of the gospel; and in these attempts he was generally useful and successful.

One Sabbath afternoon, he went out upon his errand of mercy, accompanied by his daughter, (who now well remembers the circumstance,) and saw a number of children playing upon a dust-heap, in a most deplorable condition; some were nearly naked, and others had merely dirty sacking to cover them. Unconscious, however, of their own degradation, they were dancing merrily upon the loathsome accumulation of rubbish, when Mr. Cranfield went up to them, and commenced singing, to a sprightly tune, the lines—

“Idle boys and girls are found
Playing on the devil’s ground.”

The children, struck with astonishment, ceased from their gambols: and, like persons in expectation of some fearful visitation, shrank back, and drew near to each other. “My dear children,” said he, “do you know you are standing on the devil’s ground? Yes,” he continued, as they cast their eyes first on the ground, and then on him, with wonder and surprise, “this is the devil’s ground; but if you will come with me to the school,” (pointing to the back of it, at that time in Peter-street,) “I will there tell you about God, and teach you to read his holy word; and, if you continue there, you shall have some nice clothes to put on.” The children now gathered around him, and asked him many questions about the school; which he answered so pleasingly, that several consented to accompany him; and having

seated them in a class, he commenced the work of instruction. So wretched was their appearance, however, that they were avoided by the other children; but, being pleased upon the whole with the manner in which they had been treated, they came again. Their parents were waited upon, who promised to send them regularly, upon which they were furnished with decent clothing, and Mr. C. had the pleasure, a few years afterwards, of seeing some of them occupying respectable stations in life.

One of these lads, thus raised from the very dunghill, obtained a situation, through the influence of one of the teachers, in a shop, where, however, the master paid but little regard to truth; and on one occasion, being desired to tell a customer, who had called about some work which had been neglected, that which he knew to be a falsehood, he peremptorily refused, saying, that his teacher had instructed him never to tell a lie. He was threatened with dismissal, but to no purpose; the boy continued resolute, and the master was obliged to excuse himself to his customer as well as he was able. Notwithstanding the vexation of the master at this refusal, he could not but secretly admire the boy's conduct, and ever afterwards placed such reliance on his fidelity, as to intrust him with the key of the till; a confidence he could not place in any member of his own family. This boy, before he left the school, was in the same class as the writer of this memoir, and the last time he saw him, he was occupying a confidential situation in a merchant's counting-house.

His compassion for the wants of poor children

was such, as to prompt him to acts which would be censured by those who did not experience the same intense anxiety for their welfare. About this period, being exceedingly desirous of procuring some shoes and bonnets for the more destitute of his youthful flock, and being unprovided with ready money sufficient for the purpose, he pledged his only remaining article of plate, in order to obtain the necessary supply. At one time, when his family were going into mourning, he gave away the whole of their light-coloured clothes, rather than they should lie disused while so many children were destitute. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that children flocked to the school in great numbers, and that, though possessing a respectable income, he had but little surplus to lay by for any emergency.

Mr. C. had for some years been sailing smoothly along the stream of life, with both wind and tide in his favour; but now he was called upon to navigate in deeper waters of distress than any in which his weather-beaten bark had heretofore been launched. His devoted and amiable wife, his cheerful assistant in all his works of charity and usefulness, was now to be taken from him.

Her health had been but indifferent for some months, when, in November, 1808, she was released from sickness, sorrow, and sin, and her spirit was admitted into the unclouded presence of her Saviour, whom she loved and trusted, and whose service had long been her delight.

Her husband said concerning her—

“She had been taught to live on Jesus as a God of providence, and to trust Him in the view and experience of the deprivation of every earthly

comfort, and to the last day of her life she was accustomed to say, 'It shall be well.' I am a witness for her, that in this glorious work of living by faith, she outstripped me, and frequently reproved me for my unbelief. 'Not one good thing,' she would often say, 'has failed of what the Lord hath spoken.' Oh, how often, when God has gladdened our hearts by his kindness, has she said to me, 'Come, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!' How sweet is the memory of those days!

"Her kindness to her poor neighbours, as well as to the children of the Sunday-schools and their parents, was exemplary. She was not only an excellent pattern of domestic kindness, but an example of charity and benevolence. The instruction of the rising generation peculiarly engaged her attention. Often has she accompanied me to the schools at Tottenham, Rotherhithe, Kent-street, and the Mint, with an infant in her arms, when we lived at Hoxton. When half-hearted professors would say to her, 'I am surprised that your husband should neglect you and the family on the Sabbath, to attend the schools,' she would reply, 'He is doing the Lord's work, and I am content to stay by the stuff.' Never, no, never, have I heard her utter a single word that would convey an idea that she wished my zeal in this glorious employ to be in the least abated.

"Oh, when or where did a distressed case of any of the children's parents arise, that she did not, either by herself, or through some other person, visit and relieve? With what pleasure did she entertain the children, in their turn, on the Sabbath, at the family table! and how would she

exhort her own children to be grateful to that God who had provided for them, while many of the dear lambs at the school had scarcely any food to eat ! Let the children of Kent-street and the Mint witness, how many of those wretched objects she has taken home, cleansed from their filth, clothed in decent apparel, recommended to situations, and rendered them useful and honourable members of society. Many times has the last shilling in the house been laid out for God's poor, trusting in Him alone for a supply.

“ On the Friday morning, she said to me, ‘ My dear, let me have drink from your hands.’ I then lifted up her head, and gave it to her. ‘ You have a great trial,’ she continued ; ‘ but, I hope, God will support you under it ;’ and then prayed that the Lord would graciously help and guide me. After remaining a few minutes silent, she broke out with these words—

‘ Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings !
 Thy better portion trace ;
 Rise from transitory things,
 Towards heaven, thy native place.

Sun, and moon, and stars decay,
 Time shall soon this earth remove :
 Rise, my soul, and haste away
 To seats prepared above.’

“ She said but little after this. On the Saturday morning her immortal part escaped from its prison, and took its flight, to mingle with kindred spirits in the bright realms of eternal day.”

Her remains were interred in Unicorn-yard burial-ground, Tooley-street, and a vast number of the poor, whose temporal and spiritual interests

she had endeavoured to promote while living, followed her to her silent abode.

During the latter part of her life, Mrs. C. had paid particular attention to those poor unfortunate outcasts of society who infest the streets of the metropolis. These she was in the habit of bringing into her house, giving them articles of clothing, and exhorting them, with entreaties and tears, to abandon their vicious and immoral practices, and to enter on the paths of piety, virtue, and peace; and though she did not succeed in the accomplishment of her object to the extent of her wishes, yet she had the satisfaction of knowing, that in more than one instance her endeavours were crowned with success; and the gratitude and respect which were evinced at her funeral, by a multitude of those unhappy females, proved more grateful to the feelings of the bereaved and afflicted husband than the highest encomiums upon her life and character.

While the lifeless remains of the dear partner of his days continued in the house, Mr. C. was somewhat composed. It is true, that he wept; but there was a calmness in his grief, and a dignity in his composure, which proved that his mind was under the special control and influence of his faith in the promises of the gospel; but when the hour was come that he was to deposit the desire of his eyes in the cold and silent tomb, he became convulsed with grief, and his silent sorrow was exchanged for bitter lamentations. His friends strived to console him, but in vain; he "refused to be comforted," and said, "I will go down into the grave unto my wife mourning."

This overwhelming calamity was but the fore-

runner of others, if not equally distressing, yet, coming as they did, pressing one upon the heels of another, proved so severe as almost to shake his reason to the very foundation. He had scarcely returned from the grave of his wife, when he was informed that a friend, for whom he had made himself responsible, was unable to meet his engagements. On a sheet of paper, containing the registry of the births and deaths of his family, he makes this remark :—

“ November 19th, 1808.—Here I stand, bereft of a pious, loving wife, the excellency of all that was lovely, with six children : also a returned bill for £100, expecting to be arrested every moment ; in a state of distress unknown to any one but to God ; with a heart as insensible as steel—no spirit to pray, and fretting against the providence of the Almighty.”

After this distressing bereavement, he would not allow the window-shutters to be opened. He could not apply himself to business. The sight of his work-room served only to remind him of her who was his discreet counsellor, his improving example, and the guardian of his interests and happiness. He, therefore, soon after quitted his house, and took up his abode again in Bermondsey-street. His mind, however, still continued in a fearful state of agitation ; and all his actions, for several months, showed that he was not in a condition to manage his own affairs. Nearly the whole stock of his children's apparel was given away with the greatest indiscretion ; and, having no person to guide or restrain him, he became the dupe of the wary and designing.

It was under these circumstances that, in 1809,

Mr C. married the widow of a neighbouring tradesman, which proved a fruitful source of trouble and anxiety, as he thereby made himself responsible for the payment of his wife's debts, which were found to be of considerable amount.

This unfortunate union, however, was but of short continuance; in about three months it was dissolved by the death of his wife.

But one storm had no sooner began to subside than another seemed ready to burst upon his head. Shortly after the death of his second wife, he received a letter from the schoolmaster, under whose tuition his son (the writer of this memoir) was placed, residing near Dunstable, informing him that, in consequence of an accident, it was rendered necessary that the hand of the child should be amputated. Immediately on receipt of this letter, he put on his hat, and, with feelings which it is impossible to describe, hurried on foot to his suffering child, and, though a distance of upwards of thirty miles, he arrived at the school-house in the afternoon. Here, however, the Lord was better to him than his fears. His son, being brought to London, and placed under the care of Sir A. Cooper, was, after a considerable time, restored with the loss of only part of a finger.

In 1810, most of his children being very young, and his business calling him much away from home, (being now employed, almost entirely, in conducting benefit societies,) he was strongly urged by his friends again to marry. With this advice he thought proper to comply, and was united to a respectable widow, who was greatly attached to

him, and who made it her chief study to render her husband happy and his home comfortable.

About a month after this union, Mr. C. was called to witness the death of his youngest son, then in the fifth year of his age. His repeated trials awakened general sympathy, and many came to condole with him, among the foremost of whom was his old and tried friend Mr. Burchett.

All the Lord's people are not permitted to be tossed about in such a whirlpool of affliction, but many are; and it is frequently the lot of those whom he designs to honour with eminent usefulness. It is in this school of affliction that they acquire the tongue of the learned, and an ability to speak a word in season. Instructed by what they have themselves passed through, they are taught to sympathize with their fellow-sufferers, and to "weep with those that weep." And when they have been "brought from the horrible pit and the miry clay, and their feet set upon a rock," the remembrance of their past conflicts is sanctified, to keep them humble, watchful, and dependent in their future course.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE DEATH OF HIS YOUNGEST SON, TO HIS RESIDENCE IN THE MINT.

IN the latter end of 1809, Mr. Cranfield was called to mourn the death of his friend and co-adjutor, Mr. Sims. This gentleman, when he entered the school, was but a novice in the things of God, and seemed to engage in the instruction of children more out of friendship to those with whom he acted, than from an ardent desire for the salvation of souls. Mr. C., aware of this, embraced every opportunity of explaining to him the nature and importance of the work in which he was engaged, and the necessity of seeking that Divine aid, without which all his exertions would be as water spilled upon the ground. He wrote him letters; proposed subjects for his consideration, upon which he requested his sentiments in writing, and took him to the sick and dying, and by these means he became more enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and was taught to engage in the delightful service of his Lord and Saviour with a pure desire to promote His glory in the world.

The remains of this excellent man were followed to the grave by a long line of male and female

teachers, and were buried near those of his esteemed friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Nixon, at Collyer's Rents. The spectators were addressed by the Rev. Rowland Hill, who, standing on a tomb-stone, wept as he pointed to the grave of his departed friend and exclaimed, "There lies an honest shoemaker!"

The Gravel-lane school, in which Mr. Sims laboured, continued to flourish till the year 1811, when, in consequence of the dilapidated state of the building, the children were removed to another of the society's schools in the neighbourhood.

This loss was quickly followed by another, still more severe, occasioned by the death of his valued and long-trying friend, Mr. Burchett, a man full of good works; whose pity and compassion were ever excited towards his suffering fellow-creatures; and whose whole benevolence was exerted in relieving their wants, and in warning every man to flee from the wrath to come. Mr. C. never thought that he could speak too highly of his worth and character.

The wind and storm of trouble, which in its fury had well-nigh overwhelmed Mr. C., having subsided, he began again to experience the peace of God which passeth all understanding, filling him with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. He began to visit the prisons of the metropolis, and the misery and distress which he there witnessed, afforded him ample scope for the employment of his active and benevolent mind.

The circumstance which directed his attention to these abodes of depravity and wretchedness, was the distress of mind exhibited by an interesting female who was betrothed to a young man then

lying under the sentence of death. She came to Mr. C., and making known the circumstances* of the case, requested him to use his endeavours in obtaining a commutation of punishment. Mr. C. visited him in his cell, obtained from him such particulars as were necessary for enabling him to frame a petition, and then proceeded in his work of mercy with extraordinary diligence and perseverance. He first waited on the Secretary of State, and, being assured of the prompt attention of the government, he returned to the prison to wait the issue of his application. He had not been there long, before he received the distressing intelligence from the keeper, that he had orders to erect the fatal scaffold. The information served only to redouble his diligence. Knowing the high esteem in which the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan was held by the Prince Regent, he procured a letter of recommendation to that gentleman, and, accompanied by Mr. Doxsey, he repaired with it to his house. Mr. Sheridan being from home, the papers were left, and he was requested to call the next day. The Sabbath now arrived, and the young man's funeral sermon was preached. Mr. C., however, still persevered, and, after repeated applications, was admitted to a private interview with Mr. Sheridan, when he made such a forcible appeal in the culprit's behalf, as greatly interested his feelings, and elicited from him the promise of an immediate and personal application to the prince upon the subject. Mr. C. again returned to the prison, and in the evening, to his unspeakable satisfaction, an officer knocked at the gate with a reprieve.

*Though these circumstances are not stated, nor need be. we are to presume they were such as would justify an interference with the appointed course of justice.—[*Am. Ed.*]

Notwithstanding Mr. Cranfield had met with such extraordinary success, he was not yet entirely satisfied. The man, though reprieved, was still in confinement, and Mr. C. was resolved, if possible, to obtain his discharge. He went, therefore, again to Mr. Sheridan ; and after encountering many difficulties, he at length obtained for the unhappy man an unconditional pardon.

Towards the close of the year 1811, Mr. Cranfield having much business at Walworth, removed with his family to that place, and, notwithstanding the distance, his attendance at the Sunday-school was as punctual and regular as ever, nor were his endeavours to turn young sinners to righteousness in the slightest degree abated. His mind was constantly on the watch for fresh methods of gaining the children's attention, and improving their minds. Having, about this time, heard Mr. Walker deliver a lecture on astronomy, it struck him that the subject might be so simplified as to be brought down to the capacities of the young. He communicated his ideas to the teachers ; and Mr. Elton, one of the number, undertook to deliver a lecture in the school, while Mr. C. was to compose a catechism for the children. All things being in readiness, the parents were invited, and the contemplations of the assembly were raised to those sublime works of the great Creator which the regions of the sky contain, and the midnight hour unveils. After this, the elder children were taught to deliver the lecture, while the younger repeated the catechism. These exhibitions were continued every winter during several succeeding years ; and as Mr. C. was constantly improving his illustrations, it is sup-

posed that the apparatus, at different times, did not cost him less than \$250. These lectures were the means of increasing the number of scholars.

In all his plans for the improvement of the children, an especial regard was paid to their spiritual welfare. All their little treats and amusements were made subservient to this one object; and on this he constantly and steadily fixed his eye. It was for this purpose that he now assembled them together twice in the week, and taught them writing and ciphering. One hour was occupied in these secular pursuits, and the remainder of the time devoted to religious exhortations.

In 1820, the neighbourhood of the Mint was considerably improved by a new road being cut through it to the Southwark bridge, on which occasion the old school was pulled down, and the children removed to a house in Mint-street; from whence, also, they were again removed, in 1828, to John-street.

In the year 1824, Mr. Cranfield being anxious to know the state of education in the Mint district, explored the neighbourhood, making inquiries in different parts as to the number of families in a house, and the number of children in each family. From the information he received, he drew an average of the probable number of children; and then went round to the various schools, to ascertain how many scholars, in each, resided in that district. The following was the result of his inquiries and calculations:—

The number of houses in the interior of the Mint is 1040; the number of families occupying those houses, 2973; the number of children from five to sixteen years of age, reckoning two and

a quarter to each family, 6689; the number of children receiving instruction in the various Charity, National, Lancasterian, and Sabbath schools, 2457. So from this statement it would appear that there were 4232 children living without instruction.

The important statement made by Mr. C. having been publicly contradicted, he determined upon a more minute inquiry. A complete map of the Mint was drawn, with all its lanes, courts, streets, and alleys, and the number of houses and families, with the children in each, ascertained by actual inquiry at every dwelling. This work occupied him and his son for several weeks; and at the close of the inquiry, he found that he had rather under-stated than over-stated the numbers. In some houses two and even three families were found occupying one room; and in some of the lodging-houses there were nearly one hundred inmates, of whom very few were able to read. These lodging-houses were kept principally for the use of poor travellers; but in some of the better regulated of them, there were a great many constant residents, who paid daily from two to three pence for their accommodation.

The lodging-houses having been thus brought under his notice, he felt desirous of introducing the gospel among the inmates. He, therefore, prevailed upon the proprietor of one of these houses, in which there were one hundred lodgers, to consent to have the place licensed for the performance of public worship. This was done, and several ministers proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation to this poor, but now orderly society of men.

The origin of this service was very interesting

The lodging-house was frequented nightly by many poor people, who obtained their living by hawking, begging, singing in the streets, and other methods. On some occasions, more than one hundred were accommodated for the night. Each person paid a small sum for his accommodation, which was homely but clean. A number of hammocks were raised in the rooms, just large enough to accommodate a single person. Early in the morning the inmates were called, and the slumberers were, after a sufficient warning, ejected from their resting-places by the sudden falling of the little hammock. At this place, on one occasion, the agents of the local Christian Instruction Society called and left the weekly tracts, which were handed to the lodgers—they were read by a few, and neglected by others. A variety of circumstances led some of the poor people, who were confined within doors during the Sabbath, to inquire if a sermon could not be preached to them. The owner of the house had no objection; but who was to be procured? The friend who left the tract was consulted, and promised to attend to their wishes. The subject was mentioned to Mr. C. He lost no time in looking after this new scene of labour, and made great efforts to accomplish the wishes of the inmates. In this work he had the kind co-operation of the proprietor of the place. He fixed upon a cellar, which he thought would make a good place for prayer. The accumulation of many years' rubbish was removed, the place was well cleansed and lime-washed, and prepared for the service of God. In visiting the cellar, with these poor mendicants and outcasts, Mr. C. found peculiar delight. He was in

his very element. There he spent much time on the week-days in teaching the inmates to read, and explaining to them different portions of the Holy Scriptures. On the Sabbath afternoon, for several years, and until his removal to a better world, he was constantly found at this post of labour. After a short time, this place was taken under the superintendence of the "Union street Christian Instruction Society," though Mr C. still continued to attend it as one of the society's agents.

The following extract of a letter to a friend, will show, not only his care and attention towards the inmates of the lodging-house, but, also, the extent to which the good seed of the word of life was thus sometimes scattered.

"DEAR SIR,

"I take this opportunity of acknowledging your kindness in furnishing me with a grant of tracts; they have been distributed, some at the Cape of Good Hope, others among my wretched neighbours, but the greater part at the lodging-house. Some of these inmates carry the word of life wherever they go. One man, to whom I gave a bundle of tracts, distributed them in every town and village he passed through in his travels; and another, in his journey to Scotland and back, left one at every lodging-house at which he stopped. Thus far, sir, I have sowed the seed, and am watering it with prayer. I am now looking for the harvest; but it may not be in my lifetime. One thing I am persuaded of—it will not return void. No, the lip of Truth hath said it; therefore, I am thankful that I am enabled to leave it

in the hands of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. Mr. Roper preached at the lodging-house last Sabbath, and recognised a traveller whom he had seen at his meeting in Devonshire. Mr. Hill said to me the other day, 'You must ferret these poor creatures out of their holes.' 'But, sir,' I replied, 'it is impossible; they will not come out.' 'Then,' said he, 'you must take the gospel to them. These were the words of Mr. Hill. Now, that the orders of this holy man may be put into execution, I call upon you, sir, to give them an address on the first Sabbath in the next month at three o'clock.'

His friend promptly obeyed the call. On reaching the place, he was directed by the venerable man to follow him through several dark passages, when he descended with him into the cellar. About one hundred persons assembled. 'Their behaviour was most attentive—they united with much spirit in the praises of God. The friend had some difficulty in standing erect in the little chapel. His discourse, on the parable of the prodigal son, was listened to with great attention; and at the close Mr. C. poured out his soul to God in prayer, and urged the people to turn to the gracious Redeemer. His heart was full, and with great energy he said—"O come, let us join once more in our beautiful hymn,

'Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched!' " etc.

Never will this scene be forgotten by the speaker.

Much good has been done by the humble services at the lodging-house. The place is now

(1844) well managed; all profane and improper language is condemned; and on the Sabbath evening the owners have been seen leading their lodgers in bands to the neighbouring places of worship. A library for the benefit of the inmates was presented by the (London) Religious Tract Society, and it is hoped that the labours in this spot have been productive of many moral and spiritual benefits.

During the time he resided in King-street, Mr. Cranfield paid frequent visits to the various prisons in the metropolis, especially to that in Horse-monger-lane, where he was sometimes admitted to the condemned cell, and preached Christ crucified to the unfortunate malefactors. Having heard one day, that a poor man in this prison was ordered to be executed for robbery and assault, Mr. C. resolved to visit him. He, accordingly, repaired to Horsemonger-lane, and was admitted to the prisoner's apartment. The young man was pacing the room with hurried steps; but what was the surprise of Mr. Cranfield, when the prisoner turned round, and, with a look of astonishment, mentioned his name. Mr. C. soon found that he was one of the old scholars of the Mint, who had been seduced from the path of virtue by wicked companions, and that he entertained no hopes of mercy. His appearance was not that of the hardened and unsubdued felon, treating with contempt the utmost power of the law; but that of the broken-hearted penitent, who would gladly retrace his steps, and return to the order and purity of domestic life. "Oh, sir," said the young man, "would that I now were sitting on the form where you used to instruct me! If I had listened to your

admonitions, I should not have now" (pointing to his fetters) "been in this wretched condition." Then rising from his seat, which he had upon the entrance of his teacher resumed, and clasping his hands together with a look of unutterable agony and despair, cried, "Oh, how have I hated instruction, and refused to listen to the voice of my teachers!" Mr. C. was greatly affected at this melancholy spectacle; he mingled his tears of sympathy with the prisoner's tears of bitter sorrow, and endeavoured, by the consolations of religion, to inspire him with the hope of obtaining mercy at the hands of the Lord, from whom he had grievously departed.

Not satisfied, however, with administering cordials to his afflicted soul, Mr. C. determined to use his exertions to prevent the extreme penalty of the law from being inflicted on his body. Having furnished himself with the necessary information, he drew up a petition to the Secretary of State, in which the prosecutor joined in recommending the prisoner to mercy. On the following day, however, he was somewhat discouraged, by observing in the public prints, that the Surrey magistrates had vainly endeavoured to interfere in the prisoner's behalf; still he persevered. He waited on the Rev. Rowland Hill; and so far influenced him in favour of the criminal, as to obtain from him a recommendatory letter to an influential member of the privy council; and, eventually, the sentence was changed into transportation for life; but not until the fatal apparatus was erected for the culprit's execution, and his funeral sermon preached! The exertions, however, of Mr. C. did not terminate here: he drew

up another petition, praying his Majesty not to suffer the young man to be sent out of the country; and, after a vast deal of trouble, he was informed that the prisoner would only be sent to the hulks, at Woolwich. The last time Mr. Cranfield saw him, he appeared to be truly penitent, and was paying a respectful attention to the claims of religion.

Mr. C. used frequently to mention a circumstance that happened about this time, and which greatly interested him. One morning, being at the house of Mr. Justice Bailey, on behalf of a young man under sentence of death, he saw the servants, who had been attending family worship, descending the stairs with their Bibles in their hands. "Here," thought he, "I shall be sure to succeed; for this is the house of a Christian; and piety and mercy always go hand in hand."* He was not deceived; the representations that he made were such as to induce that enlightened judge to recommend the prisoner to his Majesty's mercy. The young man was then ordered to be transported for life: he again interfered, and the government consented to his remaining at Chatham. A third time he petitioned for a mitigation of punishment, and the prisoner was then removed into the penitentiary at Millbank: from thence he was some time afterwards liberated, and is now occupying a respectable and confidential situation in the country.

These are not the only instances in which he succeeded in saving the lives of prisoners which had been forfeited to the laws of the country:

* Justice might require the execution of the law, and then mercy and piety would hold their peace. *Am. Ed.*]

others, of an interesting character, might be added. Indeed, the numerous cases in which Mr. C. exerted himself, for the purpose of rescuing his fellow-creatures from the severity of the criminal law, would alone furnish sufficient matter for a volume. His drawers were filled with petitions to government, and briefs to counsel, on the latter of which various sums of from one to three guineas were marked, and on nearly all of which the verdict of "not guilty" was recorded. These sums were often paid out of his own pocket, besides expenses of attending the Maidstone, Kingston, and other assizes. His success, in these undertakings, was truly astonishing; indeed he never was known entirely to fail in any case which he undertook. The reason was this—he always commenced the work with fervent prayer, and, having implored God's assistance in the undertaking, he proceeded with a resolution and perseverance, which were only increased by difficulties, and stimulated by opposition.

In the Fleet prison he introduced a weekly prayer-meeting, which was held several months in the room of Mr. Smith, who had been for a number of years confined for contempt of court, and whose sufferings and imprisonment subsequently furnished matter for much comment in the daily newspapers, and were such as to excite the sympathies of the public. These meetings were made a blessing to many. A short time since, the son of Mr. Smith was met by one of Mr. Cranfield's daughters, and, after making inquiries respecting her father's welfare, he said, "Tell him how much obliged to him I feel for having conducted the prayer-meeting in our room. I was then a

thoughtless young man, and loved more he game of rackets than the study of my Bible; but, through his instrumentality, I have been enabled to discover my sin and danger, and am now constant in my attendance on the means of grace. I shall have reason to bless God as long as I live, that his attention was ever directed to our prison."

About the year 1828, his calls to attend the beds of the sick and dying, in the Mint, becoming much more frequent, and being then in his seventy-first year, he removed altogether to the Mint, and took up his abode in the very centre of the place that had been now for nearly thirty years the scene of his labours. Here he employed himself in going about from house to house; inquiring into the state of education among the children, exhorting the inhabitants to attend on the means of grace, visiting the sons and daughters of affliction, and pouring the balm of consolation into their troubled spirits. Having now an income barely sufficient for his own maintenance, he had but little to give to the poor. When, therefore, he met with any peculiar case of distress, he was in the habit of relieving it with what money he had in his possession, and placing it to the Lord's account, (as he termed it :) he then made out a statement of the case, and sent it to some more affluent friend, and he soon became possessed of sufficient funds, not only to balance the account, but also to secure a surplus for the further relief of the sufferer.

In the winter seasons, Mr. Cranfield spent much of his time in collecting supplies for the relief of the poor; and with the money which he obtained he purchased bread, rice, potatoes, sage and the

necessary ingredients for soup ; and in this work he was generally busily engaged during the whole of the frosty weather. The Rev. Rowland Hill assisted him greatly in his benevolent schemes, not only by contributions from his own purse, but also by recommendations to various members in his congregation, who were in possession of this world's goods.

The plan which he adopted in affording relief was this : when persons applied for assistance, he took down their names and addresses, and visited them at their own homes ; he then spoke to them upon the concerns of their souls ; inquired if they had a Bible, if they attended a place of worship, or sent their children to a Sunday-school ; and, after satisfying himself of the deserving character of the applicants, a ticket was given them, with which they called at the school the next day, and received such supplies as their case demanded.

In detailing the proceedings of one of these days, he makes the following remark :—" Distributed seventy-seven loaves of bread, and seventy-five quarts of good rich soup. The whole business was completed within one hour, without the least confusion. Never was a benefit received with such expressions of gratitude. Several of the poor creatures, when receiving the food, had their faces bedewed with tears. One woman, who had not tasted food for two days, wept aloud for joy. The sight was too affecting to behold. Several of them were the Lord's poor, and of the fifty-one individuals who received this temporary supply only two had any allowance from the parish."

Much good was done in this way, and many

were thereby induced to attend the means of grace ; but as others, through want of decent apparel, were ashamed to repair to public places of worship, Mr. C. prevailed upon the Rev. Rowland Hill to preach a sermon to them at the Sunday-school ; with which request he complied, and the place was crowded. His example was followed by others, while Mr. Cranfield generally officiated as clerk. There is now a service every Sabbath for the poor of the Mint.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE OPENING OF THE MINT INFANT-SCHOOL, TO
HIS SEVENTY-SEVENTH YEAR.

WHEN the plan of infant instruction was published to the world, Mr. Cranfield hailed it as a harbinger of brighter days. He foresaw that many who would not allow their children to attend a Sabbath-school, would be glad to have a place where they could send them on the week-days, while they were engaged from home in their ordinary occupations; and thus, not only the children, but the parents, through them, might be instructed in the things which make for their everlasting happiness. Having, therefore, obtained permission from the committee of the Southwark Sunday-school Society to instruct the infants in the Mint school, he, on the 5th of July, 1830, opened that place for the reception of infants, who attended in great numbers; and, although in his seventy-third year, he proceeded in the work with all the ardour and energy of a young man. He visited several infant-schools to observe their proceedings, and having obtained much valuable information, he returned home, to mark out a course for himself. His first aim was to instruct the children in a thorough knowledge of the word of life, with

most of the histories, incidents, doctrines, and precepts therein contained. He composed catechisms on a number of interesting subjects, such as the journeying of the children of Israel, the life of Christ, Joseph, David, and of all the kings of Israel and Judah. He taught them the Jewish weights and measures; engaged them in making various measurements in the street, and on the school-floor; such as of Noah's ark, Og's bedstead, and the stature of Goliath; and by these means the children obtained much knowledge of the historical part of the word of God.

The intellectual instruction of his scholars he made only a secondary object. Once a quarter he assembled the parents, to witness the progress of their children; and on these occasions, he would endeavour to get the Rev. Rowland Hill, or some other pious friend, to preside and deliver an address. Mr. Hill, at the first, did not approve of these infant seminaries; but when he witnessed the children's knowledge of the Scriptures, and found, from actual examination, that that knowledge was not so superficial as he expected to find it, his opinions underwent an entire change, and he declared that the introduction of the infant-school into the Mint, was one of the greatest blessings that could have been conferred on the inhabitants.

These quarterly meetings proved extremely interesting, and were generally attended by a number of respectable persons: this was especially the case on one occasion, when Mr. Hill presided. Oh, it was a delightful treat to see the two aged pilgrims, surrounded by a motley group of upwards of one hundred infants, whom they were

endeavouring, with lively zeal and animation, to lead to the Saviour! The contrast here exhibited of youth and age, would have afforded an admirable subject for the pencil.

Though the time of Mr. Cranfield was much occupied in the school, he still found opportunities for writing to his friends, even amidst the noise and bustle of the children. The following extract from a letter to his daughters, will show the continued spirituality of his mind, and his aptitude for religious correspondence under such circumstances:—

“ Mint Infant School, Oct. 18th, 1833.

“ MY DEAR GIRLS.

“ While in bed this morning, at five o’clock, I was reading of a little maid that was brought to the market to be sold. The chapman said to her, ‘If I buy you, will you be faithful?’ The answer was, ‘I will be faithful, whether you buy me or not.’ What am I taught by these words? This: I am labouring in the cause of God; and it is my *duty* to be faithful, though God do not buy me; that is, though he does not give me any encouragement—though I labour under a sense of sin, and guilt, and painful trials. Ah, my dear children, I assure you I do labour in the very fire, unobserved by any but God himself.

“ This is your brother Thomas Zechariah’s birth-day. Well, what doth this day remind me of? God’s faithfulness. If I ever prayed, it was on October 18th, 1788, at ten o’clock at night. It was a dark night—Martha in the cradle, ill with the measles; mother near her confinement.—(Called off again.)

“ Brother Beal has just called in with a kettle of soup for my poor widows. We had a word in season. He is gone to visit some of them. I must close with reluctance, for the children are very noisy. God of his infinite mercy bless you all.

“ Your father, in the best bonds,

“ THOS. CRANFIELD.”

The following letter was written under similar circumstances :—

“ Infant School, Monday.

“ DEAR CHILDREN,

“ It is with pleasure I inform you, that mother is better, through the medicine you were so kind as to send ; but as for me, I find myself very poorly.

“ My soul is in a weak state, by reason of want of application to my only Physician. Ah ! none but he can heal my malady. My complaint is deep-rooted, and has been of long standing ; my whole heart is affected, and it weakens every nerve of my soul. It unfits me for work, and will end in eternal death, if help is not afforded. I feel my sickness ; and my blessed Jesus bids me call upon him, for he is a Physician of value. Him his Father hath sent, and qualified to heal *all manner* of diseases. I am affected with ignorance, deafness, discontent, unbelief, hardness of heart, temptations of Satan, stings of conscience, and, in short, I am surrounded with a multitude of evils. He says that he fully understands my case, and that he has an infallible remedy at hand ; and that he is at home by night and by day, and ready to prescribe for me, if I do but call on him : and that I need not bring any money with me,

for if I did he would not accept it. But I feel a strange backwardness to come to him: my mind, somehow, would look to physicians, like Asa, that are of no value. Carry an old man in the arms of your faith, and lay him before this Physician. I know he has rich cordials of promises in his word. Oh that I could but feel his tender hand applying these remedies to my soul! I do not complain of Jesus, my healer, but of myself.

“My children are running about, and confuse me; therefore I must close.

“May the Eternal God bless you, and be your director; and oh that we, as a family, may be interested in the covenant of his love, is the prayer of your

“Most affectionate father,

“THOS. CRANFIELD.”

During the time he was engaged in this school, no less than two thousand children passed under his instruction, some of whom, although very young in years, died, leaving behind them very satisfactory evidences of their meetness for the heavenly kingdom. Particularly was this the case with a little girl five years old, and a boy six, who both were the means of their mothers' conversion. The latter child died while in the exercise of prayer. Mr. Cranfield, in writing to a friend, detailing an account of his success, closes with the following remark:—

“Permit me to say, that I have spent thirty-three years in endeavouring to instruct the children of the poor in this neighbourhood, and have seen the fruits of those instructions in the salvation of many; but my past labours appear as lost,

in comparison with what I anticipate from the effects of infant-school instruction, when my head will be laid low in the grave."

Much of his time was occupied, between school-hours and on half-holidays, in visiting the parents, to whom he always sent tracts by the children, and exchanged them weekly. These visits were frequently made instrumental in enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and several died happy in the Lord. Some of these death-bed scenes were of a very interesting and encouraging nature.

He was sent for to visit a poor sick woman, who had two children in the Mint school. She was in the last stage of a decline. In answer to his questions, she said that "she had a good hope she should go to heaven, because she had always acted uprightly, and could not reproach herself with being guilty of a single immoral act; and that, after all her afflictions in this life, she could not believe that God would refuse to receive her to himself when she died." Upon his further questioning her, she said, that it was true she had neglected the worship of God, and the concerns of her soul; but then her domestic duties were so many and so pressing, that she could not find time for the former, without neglecting the latter. Seeing the awful delusion under which she was labouring, he warned her of her danger, and endeavoured, by the assistance of God the Spirit, to awaken her to a true sense of her spiritual condition. After some conversation, he read to her the third chapter of Romans, and further explained to her how she was held under the power of sin, and the curse of the broken law. He

called several times without any apparent success · and, being greatly concerned lest she should perish without an interest in the Saviour, his visits were repeated more frequently, and he spent much time in secret prayer on her behalf. At length, it pleased the Lord to open her eyes, and to turn her from darkness unto light, when she became greatly concerned about her soul. Shortly before her death, when he entered the room, she took his hands in hers, and said, “God bless you, my dear sir, for all your attention to me. You have been the means of saving my soul. Farewell; I am going to my Father’s house. Blessed be his holy name, he has pardoned all my sins. When you first visited me, and told me of my sinful state, you made me tremble, though I could not see the justice of your remarks; but, blessed be his holy name, he has not only showed me my sins, but he has washed them away in his blood.” The remainder of this account must be given in his own words:—

“Wednesday. — She seemed delighted as I entered; and, having helped her to a little drink, she took me by the hand, and began to converse with such freedom, as both delighted and astonished me. ‘I have no hope,’ she said, ‘but in Him that died on the cross. Oh no, no, no! none but Jesus could pardon me. He has done it; and, blessed be his name, He is a Saviour of sinners, and the vilest of them. There is none other name given under heaven whereby they can be saved. Glory, glory be to his dear name. O sir, Jesus Christ is every thing; none but he could do sinners good. May he bless you, and bless your instructions to my children.’ I now entreated her

to be silent, as I was sure her weak frame could not long support such exertion. ‘No, no,’ she said, ‘I must speak of Jesus; I love to speak of him, for he has saved my soul: and she thus went on, until nature at length became exhausted, and her tongue could no longer discharge the office which her grateful heart was still desirous it should perform. Having read the 103d Psalm, and engaged in prayer, I bade her farewell; and went home with my heart glowing with gratitude and joy, having witnessed one of the most delightful scenes which can possibly interest the heart of a Christian. Never in my life did I have the gospel preached to me with such force and power, as it was by this poor emaciated creature. On Sunday morning, at seven o’clock, I was sent for, as it was thought her departure was then at hand. She moved her lips, as if desirous of speaking; but the power of utterance was forever gone. I asked her if Jesus was still precious to her soul; if so, to lift up her hand, which she immediately did. I called again at twelve o’clock, and found her still in the body. I spoke to her of the presence of Christ in the valley of the shadow of death, and asked her if she still felt him near, and if so, again to hold up her hand; she accordingly held it up, and waved it. I visited her again at a quarter to two, and just as I entered the room her happy spirit departed.”

In August, 1834, he was sent for to visit a dying man near to the school, and attended him constantly for three weeks. At first his views were dark, but light began to break in upon his mind, and he was at length convinced that his righteousness was as filthy rags. A little half-penny book,

entitled, "The Cloud; or Look beyond it,"* was given to him, which afforded him much support and consolation, and was the theme of his conversation for several days. Being asked what his soul breathed after most, during his wearisome days and nights, he made a long pause, and then said, "It breathes after a solid holiness of heart. I want sin out of me." On the day of his decease, Mr. Cranfield says, "I visited him about noon, and, seeing he could not continue many hours, I said, 'You are walking in the dark vale of death. Are you looking beyond the cloud?' His answer was, with a low voice, 'I am looking THROUGH the cloud.' These were his last words to me. I asked him if he found his mind supported by the word and the Spirit of God. He gave me his hand, with a sign that it was. After prayer, seeing his mouth parched, I went to procure him a little jelly; but before I returned, his soul was departed—I hope to be with Jesus."

The last case selected, is one that made so powerful an impression on his own mind, that he could scarcely think on any other subject for weeks afterwards. It shall be given in his own language:—

"I was called upon to visit a poor man, who had been confined to his room six weeks, and was supposed to be dying. The moment I was introduced, he sprang out of bed, and earnestly seized my hand, as though I had been an angel from heaven. His whole appearance was truly appalling; his hair stood up like one that was in the utmost state of alarm. His lips quivered, his

* This is one of the publications of the American Sunday school Union.

knees trembled, and agony and despair were strongly expressed in his countenance. I begged of him to be composed, and to re-enter his bed; he seated himself on the side of it, and, in a state of distraction, cried out, ‘Oh, the burning lake! the burning lake!’ I requested him to be silent, and to hear what I had to say; but he paid no attention to me, and continued to vociferate, ‘Oh, the burning lake!—I saw their horrid countenances, and they told me that I should be there, and remain for ever and ever!’ He again grasped my hand, and, gnashing with his teeth, continued to utter similar expressions. Dreadful as was this scene, I still pressed the man to hear me, if it was only for one minute, as I had good news to tell him; but all was in vain; he still continued to cry, ‘Oh, the burning lake! I am the vilest sinner that ever lived! I shall go there, and be lost for ever!’ ‘Will you,’ said I, at length, with great earnestness, ‘hear me just for one moment, or not?’ He then said, ‘Well, sir, I will hear you,’ and for a moment ceased. Seizing the opportunity, I said to him, ‘Look on me, and listen to what I am about to say:—The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.’ He looked at me with attention, and replied, ‘But I am the greatest sinner that ever existed!’ ‘Oh,’ said I, ‘I will challenge you upon that score. I have been a soldier, and you know that soldiers in general are very wicked: I have been a blasphemer.’—‘So have I,’ said the man. ‘I have been a persecutor.’—‘So have I.’ ‘I have,’ said I, ‘set at naught God himself. Nay, I have been so alarmed on account of my sin, that I have been afraid the ground would open its mouth and swallow me up; but I

obtained mercy, and so may you.' The man now ceased to reply ; and I went on for about an hour, showing him, from God's word, his readiness to forgive. But the word seemed to make no impression on his mind ; and after prayer I took my leave, having promised to visit him again. As I bade him farewell, he looked at me very earnestly, and said, ' I shall be dead, sir, before you see me again.' At six o'clock, I repeated my visit, and he appeared to be in the same state of mind, crying out that he should go to the lake. Since I had called in the morning, the Rev. Mr. Stevenson had visited him, but without any apparent success. After some conversation, I told him that I would go home and pray for him, but that, at the same time, he must pray for himself. He replied that he could not pray. I then asked him as a favour, to say these words—' God be merciful to me a sinner,' and to keep on saying them until God should answer him, and pardon his sins. I returned home, with my mind deeply impressed with the awful scene I had witnessed. I retired to bed, but could not sleep ; and I may say, that I continued nearly the whole of the night in prayer to God for him. In the morning, at nine o'clock, I hastened to the house again, not expecting to find him alive ; but, behold, I saw him below-stairs, ' clothed, and in his right mind,' with the Bible on his knees. I looked, and looked again, and with astonishment said, ' Am I deceived ?' He answered, ' No ; it is I. Oh sir, I have had such a comfortable night as I never experienced before. I have lost the burden : blessed be God, here I am, with my precious Bible.' He then broke out with these words—' And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day

when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' 'Where,' said I, 'did you find that blessed scripture?' 'Here,' he replied, pointing to Malachi iii. 17, 'in my precious Bible.' After some delightful conversation, I engaged in prayer, and again took my leave ; and the next day he went into the country for the benefit of his health, and I saw him no more ; for very soon after his arrival at the place of his destination, he died."

Being extremely anxious to learn his dying testimony, Mr. C. wrote to the minister who, he understood, had attended him in his last moments, from whom he received the following reply :—

"When I saw him, he seemed overwhelmed with a sense of his deep depravity, enormous guilt, and great unworthiness ; and attributed it to Divine long-suffering *alone*, that he was not then with the devil and his angels ; and was frequently crying for mercy. I believed him to be a sincere penitent, for he expressed himself as having a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. In this state I left him, and regret I saw him no more. I understand from his family, that he continued to evince the same disposition. The day before his departure, he became delirious ; but before he left the world, was quite collected, and had an easy exit. After his delirium, a lady (who was very kind during his illness) visited him, who proposed some very interesting and important questions to him. His answers were expressive of hope as to his reaching the promised land, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the exercise of unmerited mercy."

In 1832, Mr. Cranfield, at the request of several of his friends, resigned the office of superintendent of the Mint Sunday-school into the hands of one of the teachers, and employed his time on the Sabbath, during the intervals of worship, in visiting the various schools connected with the society, and watching the progress of the good work in the lodging-house.

In 1833, Mr. C. was much affected by the death of his friend and pastor, the Rev. Rowland Hill. When intelligence was brought to him of the venerable saint's entrance into his rest, he clasped his hands, and cried, "My father, my father! Ah," he continued, as his eyes filled with tears, "he is gone, and I only am left of all the early friends of the Southwark Sunday-school Society. God grant that, like him, I may be faithful to the end, and die gloriously in the field."

When the cholera, in 1833, appeared in London, it made frightful ravages among the inhabitants of the Mint; and Mr. C. was called out at all hours of the day and night. It is believed by his family, that he did not visit less than fifty persons who were afflicted with this dreadful disease, most of whom were objects of great wretchedness; and he obtained considerable sums from his friends for their relief. Some of these poor creatures died happy in the Lord; but many, it is feared, departed into eternity, without experiencing that change of heart, without which no man can see the Lord. One person whom he visited was an old scholar, who had been connected with one of the leading infidels in London, and had imbibed his principles. The sight of Mr. C. seemed to increase his anguish: the powerful addresses he

had heard him deliver came to his mind, and filled him with unutterable despair. "I know, sir," said he, "that you will stand at the bar of God as a witness against me; but it is now too late to repent." All the endeavours of his old teacher to bring him to Christ were unavailing; he died full of enmity to God, and cursing the miserable day on which he had received his existence. The mind of Mr. C. was greatly affected by this case; and he made frequent use of it in warning young persons against infidel companions.

In April, 1834, Mr. C. was called to resign his third wife into the hands of Him from whom he had received her. She was an humble, unobtrusive Christian. She seldom left her home; and her greatest earthly delight seemed to consist in seconding her husband's efforts to relieve the poor and friendless. Frequently, for weeks together, she has sat up late at night, watching the soup-kettle, and has returned early in the morning, before the fire was extinguished, to the same occupation. Mr. C. bore up under this stroke of affliction, with wonderful fortitude and resignation: he sorrowed, indeed, but not as one that had no hope. Three days after her death, he wrote these words in his little memorandum-book: "Oh, who can be a substitute for my dear wife? My children are loving and kind, and so are my friends—but they are not my wife." And shortly after her funeral, he added, "I have buried her at Collyer's Rents, in the hope of eternal life; and I trust shortly to lie by her side, till the resurrection morn."

As he was now in his seventy-seventh year, and required that care and attention, which it was

supposed could not be so satisfactorily rendered by strangers, each of his children, who was in a situation to do so, offered him a place under his roof, where he might spend the evening of his days in comfort and peace. This is mentioned merely to record his answer, which is every way characteristic of himself:—"I feel obliged for your kindness: but as you all live at a distance, you must excuse me from accepting your invitation. What would the poor infants do? Could I bear to see them rambling about the streets, like sheep having no shepherd? What would my poor and afflicted neighbours do? and, above all, what should I do? I should soon *rust out*, for want of some active employment; and I am too old now to break up fresh ground. No, no; let me continue in that sphere where I still may be made useful; and let me die in the midst of those with whom I have spent nearly half my existence. I desire to live no longer than I can be made useful to them." Under these circumstances, it was thought advisable that his daughter should come home, and attend upon her father during the remainder of his days.

CHAPTER IX.

LAST YEARS, DEATH, AND FUNERAL OF MR. CRANFIELD.

AFTER the death of his wife, being unable, at times, through a complaint in one of his feet, to visit those of his friends who lived at a distance, Mr. Cranfield held a weekly prayer-meeting at his own house, at which he delivered a short exhortation, and invited his friends to give their sentiments on the subject of his address. These meetings were productive of much good; they proved instrumental in the conversion of some, and in producing a higher tone of spirituality in the hearts of others; and many who, like Hannah, came to the house of prayer with their souls bowed down with a weight of sorrow, went away with their countenances "no more sad." It is impossible to describe the interest which these meetings excited. The room was generally crowded with the poor of the neighbourhood, and frequently his more affluent friends would enliven the evening with their presence and conversation. These meetings were held every Friday, till his death.

In the summer of 1837, he was much pleased by the opening of a large school-room in the Borough-road, which was built by the Southwark

Society. Almost every day he walked to the spot to observe the progress of the building, and often held spiritual converse with those who, like himself, had come to witness the operations of the workmen. A circumstance occurred here one morning of so interesting a character, that he returned home, and wrote an account of it to Mr. Heward, the proposed superintendent of the school. The following is an extract from his letter :—

“ June 13th, 1837.

“ DEAR SIR,

“As I was viewing the outside of the building in the Borough-road this morning, at seven o'clock, a decent-looking man came up to me, and mentioned my name. I did not know him, but he informed me that his name was Burns, and that it was near thirty years since he first entered the Mint school, being then about seven years of age. His wife, and another relative, were then scholars, with a youth named Wilson, all of whom I recollect. It pleased the Lord, after he left the school, to incline his mind to attend the means of grace at Lambeth, where, he trusts, he was savingly called. Here he again met with his school-fellow, and married her, and both are members of the same church. He informed me that Wilson, being brought to the knowledge of himself as a sinner, and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, eventually became a preacher of the gospel. Wilson was now anxious for the salvation of his parents, and requested Burns to use his endeavours for the purpose of prevailing on them to attend the means of grace. This he did, and, with much difficulty, succeeded in his object,

but what was the surprise of the parents, on entering the chapel, to behold their own son in the pulpit! His text was, 'By one man sin entered into the world,' etc. It pleased the Lord to enable them to see and feel the guilt and misery of sin, and to fly to the Saviour. After the service, they returned to Burns's house, and in about two hours the son joined them. Burns says such a scene followed as his eyes never before witnessed. There was weeping and rejoicing together, till a very late hour, and they experienced a heaven of joy and love. Wilson is now a missionary in India, preaching the gospel among the heathen. This evening, my heart was again gladdened by the information of a young person being brought to the knowledge of Christ through a prayer offered at the school. This person has since died happy in the Lord.

"I close this with my heart overpowered with gratitude, from a consideration of what my eyes and ears have seen and heard, of the blessing of God on Sabbath-school instruction. When I first set out, Southwark and its vicinity was a wilderness—the place of dragons. But what do my eyes behold now? 'The wilderness and desolate places are too narrow by reason of its inhabitants.' 'Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains!' '*Lift—lift—lift* up thine eyes round about, and, behold, all these gather together and come to thee.'

"I close with the prayer and blessing of the high priest—'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and

be gracious unto thee ; and lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee and thine peace.'

“ THOS. CRANFIELD.”

As the day for the opening the new school approached, Mr. C. evinced uncommon animation, and sent round to a number of friends, with an invitation to meet the teachers for prayer on the occasion.

After the opening of the school, Mr. C. requested to have a select class of elder boys placed under his care ; whom he might so instruct as to prepare them for the work of Sunday-school teaching. His request was granted, and, on entering upon this employment, he took each of his scholars on one side, and explained to them, individually, the object he had in view in selecting them from the other boys, and informed them that it was his intention to labour with them, and to pray for each of them by name, till he was converted to God. His efforts were continued with delightful zeal and solicitude up to the very last Sabbath he was permitted to spend on earth : and there is every reason to believe, that, in one or two instances, the Lord has already blessed those labours, and answered those prayers.

The winter of 1837 being very severe, a powerful appeal was made from the pulpit by the Rev. J. Sherman, at Surrey chapel, for the relief of the poor ; and large sums were collected for their use. Mr. C. likewise obtained a considerable sum for the same purpose ; and though he acted, in some measure, independently of the friends at Surrey chapel, yet they assisted him much in his benevolent object. With the money he thus obtained,

he purchased rice, sago, and potatoes; and distributed them among the poor as they had need.

Strange as it may appear, at the very time he was thus relieving the poor, it was ascertained that he was a proper object for relief himself. A friend having privately intimated to Mr. Sherman that there was no doubt but that a pair of blankets would be acceptable to Mr. Cranfield, Mr. S. lost no time in inquiring into the subject; and he found that his information was correct, for Mr. C., a short time previously, had given away part of his bedding to a poor woman that was lying-in. A pair of blankets were, therefore, instantly obtained for his use.

During the frosty weather, Mr. C. seldom went from home after dark, but employed himself in studying the Scriptures, writing catechisms for his select class, and instructing the lads occasionally at his own house. Much of his time was likewise occupied in writing short sentences on slips of paper, for the edification of his friends. These he called his "lottery tickets." He always carried a considerable number with him in his pocket-book; and at social parties, or friendly visits, his friends were accustomed to draw one from the packet, and to take it home for private meditation. The following are selected as specimens:—

"Dear friend, there is a large estate left you. It is ratified, signed, and sealed. It is certain, if you can make out your relationship to the Testator, by a living faith. Are you a son? Then you are a partaker of the Divine nature, and have fellowship with the Father and the Testator. You are raised beyond your neighbours. You have

already entered on your estate. Oh, how powerful is your interest and your prayers, in the government of the world! 'All things are yours, ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.'

"Pray for THOS. CRANFIELD."

It frequently happened that the subject of these papers was peculiarly adapted to the circumstances or state of mind of the individual receiving them. The following was drawn by the driver of a cabriolet, who, in consequence of his vehicle breaking down, had spent the evening at the prayer-meeting.

"Friend, you are invited to come in the chariot of love with Jesus; he will manifest his power and wealth, and will convey you to the heavenly country. He will conquer all that oppose. His promises are faithful and unchangeable. You are safe—there is no fear of your falling out of his conveyance. In this chariot, how sweetly, how safely, how quickly I ride to glory! Hasten the time, dear Lord."

The last one he wrote was to this effect:—

"Dear friend, admire the love of your heavenly Father toward you, in that he laid his Son on the altar on the first moment of his incarnation, Heb. x. 5, continued him thereon the whole of his life, and completed it on the cross and in the grave, Isa. liii. Christ was the great High Priest, Heb. v. 5. Meditate on this awful transaction; and pray for Thomas Cranfield."

These little papers were held in such great request, that the demand could scarcely be supplied. His application to this work became so great, that he was afraid it impeded his usefulness in other respects, and he, therefore, determined on relinquishing it. But one of his young friends having described to him how greatly those written sentiments had been blessed to her soul, many of which she had copied and distributed among her friends, to whom also, in several instances, they had been made a blessing, he resolved still to continue this mode of conveying instruction, but to confine the circulation of his papers to his more intimate friends.

Some of the friends of Surrey chapel, now considering that, from his advanced age, and the high esteem in which he was held by the poor of the Mint, he was calculated to be more extensively useful if his time were wholly employed in visiting and relieving the sick and afflicted, formed the design of subscribing together, to allow him ten shillings per week, to assist him in this object, on condition that he would resign the charge of the infant-school, and devote himself entirely to it. The plan being submitted to Mr. Sherman by the superintendent of the Mint school, it met with his cordial approval, and by his kind assistance it was speedily carried into effect. Mr. C., however, felt some reluctance in leaving his youthful flock, but under the circumstances, he considered it his duty to comply with the wishes of his friends; and having taken an affectionate leave of the dear little lambs, whom he promised to visit occasionally at their own houses, he employed the greater portion of the remainder of his days in

the delightful work of administering to the temporal and spiritual necessities of the diseased and wretched.

In March, 1838, Mr. C. completed his eightieth year, the period which he often had intimated his wish to behold, provided he might continue till then useful to the church and the world: and with the exception of his left hand, which was considerably weakened, his frame remained steady and his limbs strong, insomuch that, on errands of mercy, he could generally walk a mile in about twenty minutes. The steadiness with which he wrote was remarked by every one; there was nothing in his handwriting that would have led a stranger to suppose that it was the performance of a man of eighty. As was his bodily, so also was his mental and spiritual strength. It did not appear in the slightest degree impaired. His zeal, his perseverance, his knowledge of the Scriptures, his capacity for study, and his aptitude in useful conversation at the social party, were as great as ever.

In the summer of 1838, his activity made him a wonder to many. His general health appeared to be much improved, and he was unweariedly employed in doing good: omitting no pains to alleviate the miseries of others, and using his influence with his friends, not for the advancement of himself or family, but to afford succour to the afflicted members of the church of Christ; while grace taught him to say, "Not unto me, but unto thy name be the glory."

Many of his friends now urged him to keep a diary of his experience and actions, but he replied, that such a document would savour so much of

self, that he should only commit it to the flames if he should write it. After many entreaties however, in which his family united, he at length consented, but could not be induced, by any persuasions, to continue it more than a week. His remarks on each day's proceedings are so extended, that only an extract from each can be given.

"Sunday, 17th June, 1838.—I arose this morning at three o'clock; feeling myself ill, retired to bed again; arose at five, and after communion with my Protector, on behalf of myself, family, and friends, proceeded at seven o'clock to Surrey chapel in the spirit of prayer—partook of the ordinance of the Lord's supper. I found the presence of the Lord.—My soul more refreshed than at any season for many years; Mr. Sherman administered the ordinance—returned home, and at breakfast had a profitable conversation. Read the seventh chapter of the book of Chronicles—had a good time in prayer. Went to the Borough school—met with Messrs. Heward, Churchill, and others. Mr. Churchill brought to my mind Boaz visiting the reapers. I then proceeded to the Mint school—met Mr. Smith, and had some conversation on the genealogies in the book of Chronicles—then in the spirit of prayer went to Union-street chapel—heard a stranger—a most solemn sermon: What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

" 'AS YE GO, PREACH.' "

"On my way home, I passed through Red-cross-street—met an aged woman with two of her grandchildren. She asked me how I did. I replied, In good health, and that I had heard a

solemn sermon about the value of the soul. Her children were old scholars, they attend on the means. As to herself, she appeared indifferent about her soul. I left her with a word of exhortation. After this, saw one of the parents standing at the shop-door, exposing her goods for sale: 'this woman has had twenty children, who have all received their education at the Mint school. I reproved her conduct, and told her that it would be an awful thing if her children should enter the kingdom of heaven, and she herself should be shut out. I then called upon a good woman, not seeing her at chapel—found her poorly, and spoke to her about her soul. After dinner, went to the lodging-house. On my road, met a man and his wife going to a prayer-meeting—asked them of the welfare of their souls—found them full of complaints. Came to the Mint school—found things going on well. Arrived at the lodging-house—had a good sermon from Mr. Forsyth from Jeremiah l. 5. Went to the Mint school, and addressed the children on the threefold office of Christ. Took tea at the Borough-road school—there were about fifty present—Mr. Heward, and self, addressed the company about the soul. Returned home—conversed with my son upon the priestly office of Christ—catechised my grandchildren, and closed the evening with singing and prayer. This was a good day, and profitable.

“Tuesday.—Got up at five much better—mediated again on the book of Chronicles, twenty-third chapter. At prayer I had one of the best seasons I ever enjoyed. I think I never had such a view of the Divine purity, and the utter impossibility of our praises being received without a

change of nature ; and even then, it must be with great condescension on the part of God. Oh the value of the blood of the Saviour ! I was lost in the view, and my mouth shut. Blessed be God for the book of Chronicles. Visited Miss F. In a good frame of mind—met one of the parents, he seemed to be overcome with gratitude for my attention to his son. Visited the lodging-house in the Mint—things are going on there as well as can be reasonably expected—then went into the King's Bench prison, and visited Mrs. M., one of the parents of three of my children. Mrs. M. has been a prisoner many years—still find her mind dark as to the way of salvation by Christ. Made several other visits, and in the evening heard Mr. Sherman upon the forgiveness of sin, and the boundless love of God in its forgiveness. I trust I came home profited. Had a visit to-day from Mr. Beal. The conversation with him and my son was spiritual and profitable.

“ Wednesday.—Arose at five in good health—had a good night—my cough not troublesome. Took for my morning's draught the first chapter of the first book of Chronicles. The descent from Adam to Noah, a genealogy of about 1086 years. This was a most sinful generation. Alas ! how is the gold become dim ! Death reigned through sin from Adam to Noah. What a nothing is my age and labour compared to my forefathers ! Let Enoch, that walked with God, or rather Jesus, be my pattern. These lessons I would learn from this chapter : first, to be humble—I sprung from Adam. Second, to love my neighbour as myself, being of one blood. Third, how short are the years of all generations, compared with God and

eternity! Fourth, how wonderfully trodden is the path of death—what multitudes are gone before me! Fifth, how great will be the assembly in the great day—not one be missing then! After breakfast went into the city—kept at home in the afternoon on account of the rain—took tea with some of the inmates of Mr. Hill's alms-houses—we had the presence of God with us, and a most blessed season it was—closed with prayer. Went to Union-street chapel—heard a young man, from Matthew v., 'Blessed are they that mourn,' &c. My foot was in great pain, so that I could scarcely walk home without help, which I had from a good woman whom I knew not, but was known to her—we had some profitable conversation.

"Thursday.—Arose before seven—found some difficulty in prayer. I seemed to be in a strange frame, owing, I suppose, to my increasing infirmities, but these must not prevail over the new man of the heart. Meditated on the second chapter of Chronicles again, and had new light, verse 5. How rare to find four brothers in a family distinguished for wisdom and grace! God seems to take pleasure in exalting the low, and abasing that which is high. At family worship, read the second chapter of the second book of Chronicles. May I prefer the house of God and his church to my own accommodation! Whatever I do for God, it is unworthy of his regard. I had a good time in prayer, with strong desires after God, and complete conformity to his image. I desire to put all my affairs into his hands. This morning employed in writing and reading; but, alas! what a sudden change took place in my experience at noon, and continued the whole of the day.

Ah! where are those holy feelings I had this morning!—I was then with angels and good men, walking in the golden streets on Immanuel's ground. This afternoon I am in the wilderness—a companion of the wild ass, dromedary, owl, a brother to dragons, the vulture, bittern, cormorant, and raven. I seem to lie down among them with pleasure—dancing with the satyr in their pleasant places, each crying to his mate. Isa. xiii. and xxxiv. 13. — Job describes my heart, when he says, xix. 12, 'His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.' The apostle says, that he fought with beasts at Ephesus. I also fought, and cried to God in the battle; but not with that confidence, as the Reubenites did—hence the battle was in doubt; I seemed to retreat; then to fight it out, but did not gain a victory. I retired to rest, crying, 'Woe is me, that I dwell in Mesech!—I dwell in the tents of Kedar.' Psa. cxx. These are bad neighbours to lie down with; but I cannot get rid of them, though they are very grievous to me, and opposed to my new nature.

"Friday.—My mind more calm; but feel the wound and pain of yesterday's engagement with the enemy—humbled in prayer from what I suffered yesterday. I felt for my friends, and was led out in prayer for them, that they may be kept in the evil day, and wax valiant in the warfare under the banner of Jesus—armed with the whole armour of God—and the artillery of all prayer undamaged—to be ready on every occasion. Had a good time at family prayer; and though I must not expect to be heard for the sake of my prayers, yet I cannot expect to be heard without them.

Spent the morning in writing, and meditation on the fourth chapter of the first book of Chronicles. My mind dwelt much on the character of Jabez, but still it was not so heavenly as I could wish. I desire to deal more with heavenly things, and to have my conscience purged in Jesus' blood. 'Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word.' After dinner, visited Miss A.—Had a long and delightful conversation with her mother, upon the subject of living by faith on Christ and his promises. I was then introduced to her daughter, who was lying on her back, in which posture she had continued a long time, being afflicted with : spinal affection. Her mind appeared calm, and she seemed to enjoy much of the presence of God : Drank tea with her, and in the evening returned home, and conducted our weekly prayer-meeting. Our subject was—the love of God. Oh ! what love is this, that I should be regenerated, adopted into his family, and made an heir of himself and all the blessings of the new covenant ! Oh, who can conceive the excellency of their station, or the full glory that is annexed to it ? May I have the witness of the Spirit that ere long I shall be like him !—may the consideration powerfully influence me to the study of holiness of heart and life ! We enjoyed a good season.

“ Saturday.—Arose at seven o'clock, but, owing to the pain in my foot, did not go out the whole of the day. My mind somewhat calm, and had great enjoyment in family prayer. Studied the fifth chapter of the second book of Chronicles. Here we have an account of Reuben, who lost his birthright. How does sin degrade man ! and what reason have I to be humble before God for

his sparing mercy! One false step often leaves an indelible stain on the memory—witness Noah, Lot, Judah, David, and others. How pregnant is sin with evil! how is it attended even with the greatest mischief to our temporal as well as to our eternal interest! They who are governed more by sense than by faith, in their choice of their settlement, find often, when it is too late, that they have made a very disadvantageous selection.'

These extracts, although only a small portion of what he wrote in his diary, will give the reader a general view of the manner in which his time was every day employed.

As he approached nearer and nearer to the grave, his real ripening for glory was manifested in his increasing spirituality of mind, his humility, self-abasement, and growing estimation of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He appeared conscious himself that he was on the borders of eternity; and there was a power and sweetness in his conversation on the ineffable glories of the heavenly world, and the wonders of redeeming grace, that were peculiarly grateful to the feelings of his Christian friends. A glow of delight seemed to animate his countenance, as he testified his confidence in God, his trust in the promises, his love to the Saviour, his pantings after a conformity to his image, and his bright anticipations of that day when he should awake altogether in his likeness.

All his thoughts seemed now to centre in heaven, and he could not bear to talk upon any other than serious subjects. He engaged in all his duties with an earnestness and solemnity, that manifested his apprehension that it was the last

time he should be so employed. He always entertained the idea, that his departure would be sudden, and was therefore careful to carry some cards of address in his pocket, whenever he went from home. Still his mind was not gloomy ; on the contrary, he was cheerful and lively, being full of delightful hopes of a blissful immortality.

About six weeks previous to his decease, he attended at the chapel in Collyer's Rents. After the service, he retired to the burial-ground, and, standing by the grave where his wife lay, and where he intended to be buried, he poured forth his heart to God in prayer, that the address to be given at his funeral might be made instrumental in the conversion of many souls. So lost was he in devotion on this occasion, that he appeared to be insensible to every thing that was transpiring on earth, until he was interrupted by the sexton, and given to understand that it was time for him to retire.

At the old scholars' meeting in the Mint, which took place a few days previous to his decease, and at which the Rev. J. Sherman presided, Mr. Cranfield was peculiarly solemn and impressive : he told the scholars, that, in all probability, it would be the last time he should meet with them on earth, and charged them before God to meet him at the right hand of the Saviour. At this meeting, several persons publicly declared that the instructions of Mr. C. were made the means of leading them to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus. A respectable-looking female, the mother of eight daughters, all of whom had been educated in the school, and most of whom were then present with her, stood up, and declared how

much she owed to him for the comfort and happiness she enjoyed in seeing her children walking in the truth. Mr. C. returned home with his heart filled with gratitude for having been permitted thus to see the fruits of his labour. "Who am I, O Lord," he said, as he seated himself in his chair, "and what am I, that thou shouldst be pleased thus to honour me? 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'"

At the meetings for the revival of religion, at Surrey chapel, in November, 1838, he was a constant attendant, both before and after breakfast. His feelings appeared to be greatly excited, and he was observed to be more frequent than ever at the throne of grace. If his daughter went out on an errand, she generally, when she returned, found him on his knees in prayer; sometimes wrestling with God for a blessing on those meetings, and, at other times, praying that he might not have a name to live, and be, at the same time, like the lifeless and barren fig tree, fit only to be cut down and cast into the fire. When the Rev. Mr. Kirk announced his intention of preaching to the children of the Southwark Sunday-schools, he spent the night in prayer that God would make that sermon instrumental in the conversion of the children. Towards the morning he had about an hour's sleep, and then rose to attend the seven-o'clock prayer-meeting.

On the Friday preceding his decease, he conducted his own prayer-meeting as usual, and never was he more impressive; his voice was as full and as strong as ever, and he displayed an intensity of feeling, and spoke with an authority

and power, which led many present to think 'hat his labours were about to terminate. The fervour with which he repeated his following favourite lines, will perhaps never be forgotten by them while memory holds her office:—

“Away, despair! my gracious Lord doth hear;
 Though winds and waves assault my keel,
 He doth preserve it; he doth steer,
 E'en when the boat seems most to reel:
 Storms are the triumph of his art;
 Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart.”

It was, indeed, good to be there. It appeared to be “none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven.”

On the following Sabbath, he rose long before it was light, and was heard as usual in prayer at a very early hour. When his daughter came into the room, she observed, that she was afraid that his getting up so early, while the weather continued cold, would be attended with serious consequences to himself. “I must get up early,” he replied; “see”—pointing to a list of his friends, that was at the side of his bed, for whom he was accustomed to pray every morning—“see what a deal of work I have to do!” This list he was in the habit of renewing occasionally, and was headed in the following manner:—

“*Thomas Cranfield—‘pray for us.’*”

“Lord, in the morning thou shalt hear
 My voice ascending high.”

‘First—For my son and daughters, and their little ones.

Then follow the pastors of Surrey and Union street chapels, with a list of twenty friends.

He attended public worship in the morning at Mr. Arundel's, and in the afternoon spoke at the lodging-house; he then took tea with the teachers at Gravel-lane Sunday-school, where his conversation was peculiarly edifying and instructive. In endeavouring to impress on their minds the importance of prayer, among other things, he said, "The prayer of faith can never be offered in vain. God *will* always hear prayer." Mr. Heward having announced that a tea-meeting would be held on the following Sabbath, and invited those present to attend, clapped Mr. C. on the shoulder, and said, "I know my old friend will be there." "No," he replied, "I may be in eternity then."

Early on the Monday, Nov. 26th, he was again at the throne of grace, and seemed to enjoy a peculiar flow of spirits. On washing himself, he sang with a strong voice, as was his usual custom—

"O wash my soul from every sin,
And make my guilty conscience clean."

He observed to his daughter, "I have a rare week's work to do. I have a great number of friends to visit, and am going round the neighbourhood to canvass for scholars for the Borough-road school." After breakfast, having designed to make a few visits, he folded up a bundle of tracts for distribution on the road; and on putting on his hat, he repeated (as he usually did every morning, when about to leave his home) the well-known lines—

“Thy work with pleasure, O my God,
Again will I pursue ;
And spread the savour of thy name
Among a careless few.”

The first person he called upon was a friend in the city, with whom he had a long and delightful conversation. From thence he went to Hackney, and visited another friend, and also two poor afflicted persons in the neighbourhood. To one of them he took a piece of meat, with some herbs, to make her a little broth ; and as she could not assist herself, he put it in the saucepan, and placed it on the fire for her. From thence he proceeded to Hoxton, and examined the children of a school there. From this place he went to Smithfield, and visited his youngest daughter. As he stood, with his hat in his hand, ready to take his departure from thence, he said, “I have been living near to God all this day, and I wish, like Enoch, so to walk with him, as that I may just take one step into heaven. Do not be long before you see me, for if you do, you will come home and find that your poor old father has stepped into his rest.” In the same calm and happy frame he returned to his home, and sat up late conversing upon the subject of the atonement. “This is delightful employment,” he said ; “I could sit up all night and talk on this subject, but it is our duty to rest our poor bodies.”

After retiring to rest, he seemed to sleep soundly, and, to all appearance, was in perfect health ; but about four o’clock in the morning, he awoke with a difficulty of breathing, and knocked for his daughter. On her entering the room, he said, ‘It is all over, my girl ; I am going home at last.

The Lord grant me strength and patience." On looking at his countenance, she was greatly alarmed to find it strangely altered, and asked him if she should make a cup of coffee? "Do," he calmly said; "but my work is done, and I am now, blessed be God, going home at last." His difficulty of breathing increasing, he reclined his head upon her shoulder, and soon became insensible. On the arrival of Mr. Newth, his medical attendant, he was bled, and his senses returned for about a quarter of an hour. Mr. Newth having asked if he should pray with him, he replied, "Yes, do, by all means," and added a hearty Amen to every petition. Anxious to know the state of his mind, his son, who had by this time entered the room, said to him, "It is a great mercy to have an earthly doctor, but the heavenly Physician is he whose presence is most desirable now." "That is it," he replied; "that is it. He is every thing." Not knowing who it was that spoke to him, for his eyes remained closed, he said, "Is my son Richard in the room?" and, on being informed that it was he who was talking with him, he added, "The Lord bless you; the Lord lay underneath you his everlasting arms, and support you through your trials. Dying is hard work, my boy"—alluding to his difficulty of breathing. He was then reminded of his favourite lines—

"I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there."

A smile instantly brightened up his features, and he replied, "That is a truth; I know it, both in the practice and experience of it." To his

daughter and medical attendant, he said, "You have done what you can, and I thank you; but," he added, with a significant shake of the head, "it will not do; no, it will not do:" and on their endeavouring to raise his head a little higher, in order to relieve his breathing, he said, with a smile, "Ah, you may prop, but it will not do." Shortly afterwards, he added, with a glow of sacred delight, "A few more sighs, and then——."

These words, though spoken in a strong tone of voice, interrupted only by the accumulation of phlegm, were the last that he uttered; for immediately afterwards he fell into a kind of sound slumber, in which he continued until the evening of the following day, when he suddenly ceased to breathe, and his spirit winged its way to those mansions of eternal light and glory, "where the sun goes no more down, nor the moon withdraws herself; where the Lord is the everlasting light, and the days of his mourning are ended." A solemn and painful silence ensued, till it was at length broken by his eldest daughter, who, in hurried and stifled accents, seeking relief from her own overpowered feelings, exclaimed, "We have no father now!" But the strong conviction that he was rejoicing amidst the glories of the unseen world, was felt by all.

Thus died this aged servant of Christ, who, for fifty-five years, was unweariedly employed in doing good.

"———Burning with love to souls
Unquenched, and mindful still of his
Great change and vast responsibility,"

ne appeared to live for no other purpose than to

promote the present and eternal happiness of his fellow-men.

The report of his death was soon spread through the neighbourhood, and, though it excited but little astonishment, yet, when it was announced, it gave a sudden shock to almost every mind. He had endeared himself to his neighbours and friends by so many acts of kindness, that they wept for him as for a father ; and even those who were enemies to God by wicked works, concurred in paying a just tribute to his memory. From the period of his death till the time of his interment, upwards of six hundred persons came to take a last view of the venerable saint ; and of these, it is supposed, that not less than from two to three hundred declared that they had received some benefit from his labours to their souls. The expressions of regret and sorrow that were uttered by these numerous visitors, were truly affecting. One, drawing back her shawl, would show the garment that he had obtained, for her decent appearance at the house of God ; and another would tell the tale of distress from which his benevolence had rescued her.

“ I was hungry,” said one, “ and he fed me. Oftentimes should I have gone without a dinner if he had not supplied me with rice and sago.” “ Ah,” repeated a second, “ I shall never forget him ; I invited him to spend an hour at my house and he turned his visit into a meeting for prayer, which has been continued ever since.” “ I was in prison,” said a third, “ and he visited me. When confined in the Marshalsea, I wrote that passage on a piece of paper, and sent it to him ; and before the messenger could return, he was at my side.

The moment he entered my room, he asked for my Bible: on telling him that I had none with me, he immediately went out and purchased one, and then gave me his spectacles to assist me in reading it. These spectacles I have now in my possession, and will never part with them while I live. The Bible was given, at his own request, to a prisoner whom I left behind, and is preserved by him with the greatest care." Most persons had something to tell respecting his deeds of mercy, and all united in saying, "I have lost a friend."

On Wednesday, 5th December, 1838, his mortal remains were conveyed to Collyer's Rents burial-ground, followed by a multitude of weeping friends. The teachers of the Mint school, in which he had laboured for so many years, claimed the privilege of bearing his pall; and those of the other schools seemed to vie with each other in exhibiting their respect for his memory.

The funeral procession, followed by a vast concourse of spectators, proceeded in the following order:—

PORTERS,
Two old Female Teachers,
Fifty Girls,
Two Female Teachers,
Two Male Teachers,
Thirty Boys,
Two Male Teachers,
Two Female Teachers,
Forty Girls,
Two Male Teachers,
Two Female Teachers,
Rev. Mr. Sherman and Rev. Mr. Arundel,
Treasurer of the Society—Oldest Superintendent,
An Elder of Surrey Chapel—Medical Attendant
Two Porters

Teachers,
Pall-Bearers,

Three Stewards,
(Of a Benefit Society established by the
Deceased.)

THE BODY,

Relations of the Deceased,
Teachers of Surrey Chapel School,
Teachers of Kent-street,
Teachers of the Mint,
Teachers of Borough,
Teachers of Borough-road,
Teachers of Castle-yard,
Teachers of Dockhead,
Teachers of Jurston-street,
Teachers of Bond-street,
Teachers of County-terrace,
Teachers of Gravel-lane,
Long train of Friends.

Teachers,
Pall-Bearers,

The body was taken into the chapel, which was immediately filled, and hundreds were unable to gain admission. After an appropriate hymn, the Rev. J. Arundel offered up a very suitable prayer, and the Rev. J. Sherman addressed the friends and spectators from the words, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The address excited intense interest. It was marked with deep pathos, and faithful and affectionate admonition. After concluding with prayer, the body was removed to the ground, and deposited in the grave till the resurrection. After a few observations from Mr. Heward, made at the request of the deceased, Mr. Cranfield's select class of youths sung an appropriate hymn, and the Rev. Mr. Sherman prayed, and pronounced the benediction. The ground was crowded to excess, and the lamentations of the poor were as the mourning of the Canaanites at the burial of the patriarch Jacob.

On the following Sabbath, several sermons were

preached on the occasion of his death. In the morning, the Rev. J. Arundel delivered a deeply interesting and instructive discourse, to a crowded audience, from Isa. xlv. 4, "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." In the afternoon, at the Mint school, a friend discoursed from Gen. xlviii. 21, "Behold, I die." The same afternoon, at the lodging-house, the inmates were addressed by two friends, from Phil. i. 21, and Psal. xii. 1—3. In the evening, at Surrey chapel, the Rev. J. Sherman preached from 2 Cor. vi. 10, "Poor, yet making many rich." This text was most judiciously selected, and the sermon was listened to throughout with the most profound attention. The chapel was crowded at an early hour, and vast numbers, many of whom came from a considerable distance, were disappointed at not being able to gain admission.

Such were the respect and sympathy manifested upon the removal of this devoted man to his last earthly home. "The memory of the just is blessed," says the wise man, Prov. x. 7; and never was the truth of this scripture more clearly and interestingly illustrated than at the funeral of Thomas Cranfield. May those devoted men who have entered into his labours, imitate his zeal, and, like him, adopt the maxim of the apostle—"Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." Rom. xiv. 8

CHAPTER X.

THE PERSON AND CHARACTER OF MR. CRANFIELD.

HAVING sketched the principal incidents connected with the life and death of Mr. Cranfield, it would, perhaps, be desirable to give a more detailed description of such features in his character as have only been slightly portrayed in the foregoing chapters.

In his *person* he was, in his younger days, tall and commanding, but he stooped towards the end of his life. He was stout and strongly built, though by no means corpulent; and his countenance, even in his old age, was open, florid, full of benignity, and altogether prepossessing. When, however, his anger was excited, which was but seldom, his look of indignation was terrific. When residing in Ironmonger-row, his landlord had taken the advantage of his temporary absence to indulge in some very abusive remarks to his wife, and he on returning found her in tears. The man was so thoroughly alarmed at his appearance, on his entering the shop for the purpose of giving him a severe reprimand, that, supposing some evil was determined against him, he hurried to shelter himself behind the counter. Such was the haste with which this terror-stricken man sought his

place of refuge, that every thing was overturned which lay in his way, and so exceedingly ludicrous was the scene, that the anger of Mr. C. was turned into laughter; and after mildly warning him against such conduct in future, the matter terminated.

He was a man of *extraordinary courage and intrepidity*. He appeared to be void of fear, and often entered into places where few would like to follow him. One day, being in the Mint canvassing for scholars, he found a family living on the wages of iniquity. He invited two of the daughters, one nine and the other eleven years of age, to come to the school, to which they seemed inclined, but the mother positively refused her permission. Mr. C., stung with indignation at the conduct of the woman, cried out, "What! are not your children going to hell fast enough, that you must drive them there? Woe be to you, madam, if you do not let your children come to the Sabbath-school!" Such was his energy, and such his indignant look, that the woman trembled, and, to the surprise of even Mr. C. himself, the children were afterwards sent to the school.

Mr. C. was accustomed to *endure injuries with great patience and forbearance*. Once, when a man was wrongfully insulting him, and drawing his character in most odious colours, he calmly said to him, "Well, I am exceedingly obliged to you for the very good opinion you have of me; but if you try your utmost you cannot paint my character so black as it is." At another time, a thief having entered his house, and stolen some trifling articles, he, not knowing what it was that the thief had taken, pursued and overtook him.

As the magistrates were then sitting at Union hall, he took him straight to the office, and the offender was about to be committed for trial, when Mr. C. relented, and begged for some mild punishment. He was then remanded for a short time, and Mr. C. visited him in jail, supplied him with some food, and, on the third day of his confinement, procured his discharge, and gave him half-a-crown.

Humility was a distinguishing feature in the character of Mr. Cranfield. How delightfully were its beauties displayed in him, and how extensively were its influences felt and acknowledged! Hence arose that love and respect which was so universally entertained for him. It has been often remarked by his friends, that scarcely any person could be an hour in his company without loving him; yet no one could be more loud in the condemnation of himself, or speak in stronger terms of the pride of his own heart. He was continually warning others of the latent enemy, and urging on them the necessity of cultivating a spirit of humility and self-abasement. The following extract from a letter to a teacher will serve to illustrate this part of his character —

“MY VERY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied. Beloved in our Lord, there are two sad evils in the world, among the saints in this our day—(oh that there were no more!)—the strong are very apt, yea, they make little of offending the weak—and the weak are too apt to judge and condemn the strong. A serious and conscientious

study of the Bible by the Spirit of God, will tend much to prevent this evil. In this blessed book, much is spoken of the nature, properties, and excellences of humility, which is both the beauty and preserver of all other graces. Here you see that those who are lowest in their own esteem, are highest in that of God; and also, that humble souls are not so low and contemptible in the eyes of the world, as they are honourable in the sight of God. My dear friend, do you wish to be holy? then seek to be humble. God says of Job, that he was the most holy man in all the land, Job i. 8; and yet no man ever spoke more disparagingly of himself, Job xlii. 6. How is it with you? The holy apostle had been caught up to the third heavens, and had seen glories unspeakable; yet what does he say of himself? 'I am less than the least of all saints.' Look at Isaiah vi., and Luke v. 8. What a delightful example of humility have we in the character of Abraham! Here is the greatest believer in the world considering himself as dust and ashes. Ah! I know that an humble soul is nothing in his own eyes. I was about to speak of the properties of humility, when I began to look at home, and trembled. Oh the pride of the human heart! and what am I, that I should associate with pride? Is it not a wonder that God does not dash us in pieces for our pride? Shame, shame on me! May the Lord Jesus stand between me and my heart. What! set up my righteousness against that of Christ? Down, down, self, and let Christ have all the glory! I am ashamed of what I am about to say, but I will mortify self for once, to let you see what an unholy heart I have—'I am not as this publican,' is

my language; yes, my proud heart sees more of its own worthiness than it does of its own wants and this experience I am fearful I shall carry with me to the grave; therefore I am constrained continually to come to Christ. If I am a Christian, I am said to bear the image of Christ. Oh dear! do look at that verse, 1 John iv. 17. 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment:' [now, mark,] 'because as he is, so are we in the world.' Oh, how far short am I of the experience of this holy man! What a disproportion between him and me! This is the Christian indeed: to be in full conformity to the image of Christ—in his affections, ends, designs, and actions. Oh, what an interesting being is a Christian!

"Well, I have just looked over my letter, and find it to be filled with confused ideas, first about one thing, and then another. I think I should make a bad parson; but they are the thoughts of my heart.

"Thus far I had written, and laid it by. A week had elapsed, when, turning over my Bible, I found it among the leaves. I am now confined to my chamber with a violent cold. This may be my last to you; so I will tell you how it is with me now. My mind is towards God—seeking him as though I never sought him before, alone through the atonement and righteousness of Christ. I find I am nothing, and can do nothing. I am a poor lost sinner, and throw myself at the foot of the cross.

"Yours,

"THOS. CRANFIELD.

"5th March, 1834."

Another amiable trait in the character of Mr. Cranfield, was *his lively feeling of gratitude for mercies received*. This spirit is always associated with true humility; and, in proportion to the Christian's sense of his own unworthiness, is his thankfulness for those supplies which he feels he has forfeited by his rebellion. He was accustomed to view every blessing, both spiritual and temporal, as coming to him immediately from the hands of God, through the mediation of the Son of his love. With the exception of the pardon of his sins through the sacrifice of Christ, there was nothing for which he appeared so grateful as the preservation of his life during the siege of Gibraltar, when he was yet in his sins, and exposed to everlasting ruin. After the Lord had opened his eyes, under the ministry of Mr. Romaine, and he had seen the awful gulf, upon the very brink of which he had been sporting, and from which he had been so providentially delivered, he was utterly at a loss for words with which to convey the thankful feelings of his heart; and his gratitude, instead of being diminished by the lapse of time, seemed rather to increase. From the period of his conversion, to the end of his life, he invariably kept the anniversary of the bombardment as a day of solemn fasting and prayer. In 1835 this day happening to be one on which the ordinance of the Lord's supper was administered at Mr. Arundel's, he requested his children to join with him in its celebration. The following letter he addressed to one of his daughters on the occasion:—

"Sept. 10th, 1835.

• DEAR MARTHA,

"This note comes with much affection to you, and your dear husband, requesting that you will favour me with your company, at the table of our dear Lord, on Sabbath-day next, September 13th with your brother and sisters. This is a day sacred to God, it being the fifty-third year since the grand attack at the siege of Gibraltar. Although so long since, I have still the sound of the cannon in my ears. I hear (or I think I hear) the commission of every shot and shell, saying, 'Touch not my child, for I have reserved him for my glory, that I may show forth all long-suffering, as a pattern to them who, through grace, may believe.' When I reflect on my miraculous preservation, and that of your dear mother, the circumstance of our union, and the blessings bestowed upon my offspring, the consideration is so overwhelming and amazing, that I should indeed be wanting in gratitude, were I not to acknowledge my mercies; and where can I express my gratitude better than at the table of the Lord? who says at the feast, 'Remember me.' Yes, dearest Lord, it was thy death that saved body and soul from sinking into hell. Oh, the matchless love of Christ! Millions of millions of tongues, if I possessed them, could not be sufficient to utter his praise. He is beyond all praise."

Christian charity eminently adorned the mind of Mr. Cranfield. The fruits of righteousness are not solitary; they always grow in a cluster though in different persons some may be more con

spicuous than others. The apostle intimates, that it is possible a man may possess the tongue of an angel, the wisdom and faith of a prophet, and the zeal and benevolence of a martyr; and for want of that love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things," he may, in the sight of God, be no better than a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. But the affection which burned in the heart of Mr. Cranfield, was evidently enkindled by the Holy Spirit, and produced a cordial love and good-will towards his fellow-creatures, of whatever grade or country, sect or party, they were.

Benevolence appeared to be the master-passion of Mr. Cranfield's mind. He studied the pattern, followed the steps, and drank largely into the spirit, of his Lord and Master.

He had a tender fellow-feeling for the poor and afflicted, and he denied himself many lawful gratifications for their sakes. He could cheerfully submit to any service, and thought nothing too low, or too mean, in which to engage, if, hereby, he could benefit either the souls or the bodies of men.

Through every period of his Christian life, he acted out the generous sentiment of the Roman. "I am a man, and there is nothing relating to mankind in which I do not feel interested." He participated in the joys of his neighbours, and shared their sorrows. He rejoiced with those that rejoiced, and wept with those that wept. By the poor he was considered a father. They were accustomed to consult him in all their difficulties, for time or eternity. Did the widow or

orphan require some one to assist them in settling their earthly affairs;—they came to him, and his time was ever at their disposal, without fee or reward. In settling the affairs of one widow, it is calculated that he walked no less than one hundred and fifty miles; and it was very seldom, indeed, that he was without some such business in hand. Many who were involved in pecuniary difficulties, sent for him, to intercede with their creditors on their behalf; and in this he was frequently successful. Were any in want of clothing to protect them from the inclemency of the weather; they came to him. It was only on the last day of his active life, that a poor woman, whom he did not know, came to him, and asked for a garment; and had he been in health another day, no doubt her request would have been granted. On these occasions he always spoke to them concerning their spiritual interests, and interrogated them respecting their attendance on the means of grace. When in better circumstances, he would frequently board and lodge a whole family until employment could be obtained, or relief otherwise afforded. Many are the persons, now living in respectability, whom he has been the means of raising from obscurity and want; and in his latter days, though crippled in his means, he was still the friend of the Lord's poor; and when circumstances, in his opinion, have required it, he has cheerfully parted with the dinner from his table, the clothes from his person, and the blankets from his bed.

It will be naturally supposed that, living as he did, in the midst of a poor and crowded neighbourhood, the calls on his benevolence were many

and urgent ; but there were so many kind friends who felt happy to assist him in this charitable employment, that he only had to investigate and make a statement of the case, in order to obtain the means of relieving it. The following extract from a letter to a friend, exciting him to acts of benevolence, will show his attention to the afflicted poor :—

“ Mint-street, 8th June, 1831.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have been called to visit a person in great distress, residing at No. 19, Little Suffolk-street. The man to all appearance is in a dying state. I inquired respecting his hopes for eternity ; and after relating to me his experience, I found that he was building on the covenant of works. This prop, upon which he was leaning, was quickly removed, and he began to tremble, finding he had no support. I have given him Bunyan’s ‘ Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ,’ and other suitable tracts, which have, I trust, been made a blessing to him.

“ I have constantly visited him since, and I am happy to say, that, as far as I can judge, both he and his wife are convinced of their awful state, and are seeking for salvation in Christ. But I have another thing to tell you : these poor creatures are in a starving condition. Last Sabbath, I saw that they had but a half-penny cabbage between them for dinner. I sent them a piece of meat from my table ; and frequently they have had nothing to eat till they received it from my house. The landlord now threatens to seize what few goods they have for rent. The poor man has

been recommended to the Surrey-chapel Benevolent Society, but the little he received from that source is not sufficient to sustain life. I therefore apply to you for assistance, being anxious to save the bed, which appears to be the only comfort of an earthly nature they have. I feel persuaded, that whatever God disposes your mind to give will be thankfully received. It would be an insult to say any thing further. I cannot suppose that the soul of a Christian can be drawn out in prayer for the salvation of another, without feeling, at the same time, an interest in his temporal welfare."

In these works of mercy, Mr. C. was unwearied, and the sums of money he obtained for the use of distressed objects, and his devotedness to their interests, were astonishing. Many who knew nothing of his private affairs, were led to suppose that he was a man of affluence, as his supplies appeared to be inexhaustible; while, at the same time, he was, perhaps, as straitened in his circumstances as many on whose behalf his benevolence was exercised, not thinking himself at liberty to convert to his own use that which had been intrusted to him for the use of others.

Many have objected to him, that his zeal for the welfare of others carried him beyond the bounds of prudence, and prevented him from being sufficiently provident for his family. To a person who was speaking to him one day respecting his giving away that which he stood in need of himself, he said, "Well now, come, let us reason together. This morning I visited a poor woman who was lying-in; in one corner of the room lay

the poor creature on a morsel of straw, with the new-born babe on one side of her, and on the other was a child in the agonies of death. I looked in the cupboard, and there was not a morsel of food, neither was there any fire in the grate, and the husband out of employment. Now, what would you do in such a case? The man who has but a sixpence to call his own, and has a heart to withhold it, under such circumstances, must be a monster. My Bible tells me that ‘whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?’” Before any person, therefore, can form a correct opinion of his conduct in this respect, he must possess something of his philanthropic disposition, and know more of the wretchedness which he sometimes witnessed in the squalid abodes of those to whom he often appeared as an angel of mercy. It was the delight of his heart to relieve the wants of others. “Oh, what a mercy it is,” he would sometimes say, “that I am able to assist my fellow-creatures!” and this employment he considered as much his privilege as his duty.

Though his regard for the poor, in general, was great, he felt peculiar solicitude for the welfare of those who were his brethren in Christ. The Lord’s poor he considered had especial claims upon his sympathies and prayers; he would almost beg from door to door for them, and in such a way, that few could resist the force of his appeals. “Consider,” he would sometimes say, (as the purse was drawn from the pocket, or some article of consumption was being tied up,) “for whom you are doing it: it is for one of God’s children,

and that is no mean person." The Rev. R. Hill towards the close of his life, was in the habit of placing a certain amount of silver in his purse every morning, for the purpose of casual distribution, and Mr. C. would frequently come in and lay before him a case of distress, in such a manner, as would have the effect of quickly emptying it of the whole of its contents; and after his departure, Mr. H. would sometimes observe, "When that compound of all that is good and excellent comes here, he makes me ashamed of myself, and I can really deny him nothing."

As a Christian, Mr. Cranfield generally appeared *cheerful and happy*, and was frequently as playful as a child. The children of his charge loved him as a father; and on his road to the school, he was usually met by a little company of them, for the purpose of escorting him to the place of instruction. One would seize his hand, another his coat, and the whole would gather around him so closely, that it was with difficulty he could proceed; whilst the neighbours would stand at their doors and say, "God bless that dear old man!"

At times, however, Mr. C. experienced considerable mental depression: but these seasons were generally of short duration, as on their approach he would either seek refuge in his Bible, or at the throne of grace; or he would sit down to write, for his own improvement. The latter method he very frequently practised, and generally succeeded in writing himself into a good frame. The following is an interesting specimen of this species of writing, which he addressed to his daughters:—

“ Good Friday, 1832.

“ DEAR CHILDREN,

“ I have been this day to partake of the elements of my dying Lord ; but, alas, my mind appeared overspread with a cloud, so that I could not see the Sun of righteousness ; consequently, my views of Christ crucified were not cheering, but dull. I was in a stupor, having no active apprehension of the Saviour. I find I am at a distance from him, as though I were not of the family, a stranger at home, a lifeless frame, every trifle a trouble ; nothing pleasant, no love for the word, no appetite to read and meditate. I take up one book, and then another, and lay them down, without any impression of a spiritual nature on my mind. I want (and nothing can satisfy me but that) a sense of the pardoning love of God. I am as a ship without compass or pilot, uncertain as to my steering ; fearful I shall upset on some rock, and make shipwreck of faith. Thus I have been poring in the dark, to seek for light. It is true, my nature is sin and ignorance ; I must not expect any consolation from within. Oh, to look through the cloud by faith, and see Jesus seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, pleading for me ! God is humbling me, and giving me to see my poverty, that I may live more by faith. I have known what it is to believe in the dark, and have experienced the blessed effects of it, so that I have actually possessed the blessings contained in the promises of God, and enjoyed them, as seeing them afar off. This one thing I do know, that there is no enjoyment but what springs from a sense of the pardoning love of God, applied by his Holy Spirit. This, then, is my

encouragement; although I cannot go to Christ as a child to his father, I can go as a poor sinner, saying, ‘God be merciful unto me!’ I have been inquiring why my soul is so cast down, and what I am to do in this lifeless frame. My Bible says, ‘Hope thou in God’—in his faithfulness. He is not a man that he should lie: He hath said, and he will do it. My dear girls, there is a dawn of light, this moment, sprung up in my heart from his precious word: ‘Who is there among you that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the Lord, and stay upon his God.’ And again, ‘When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them.’ Oh, here is comfort! here are fresh supplies of living water! Let me lay down my pen, and look at these sweet portions. I begin at the 40th of Isaiah, and read on through the 41st and 42d chapters. Why, I have been like Hagar in the wilderness—near the well, without being able to see it. Thus, you see, I am getting a little into the light, although it is now ten o’clock at night. The flesh says, ‘Thomas, to bed;’ but the Spirit says, ‘Go on.’ Which of the two am I to obey? My head says, ‘The flesh.’ Well, then, I will go and take some of those sweet portions, and plead them before the Lord. Farewell! Good-night.

“Saturday.—I have slept well, and find myself much better. Took a walk, and looked in at the school; came home somewhat weary—read an interesting tract about a sailor, and here I am, waiting for a bright day. It is good that a man doth wait and hope in the Lord. I had this

afternoon a sweet view of the barrel of meal; it did not waste by using; there was a constant supply. So it is with Christ; although he has enriched millions, he is not in the least impoverished. No, 'he giveth more grace.' Well, then, 'why, being the King's son, so lean from day to day?' The reason is obvious: 'You will not come unto me,' says Christ, 'that ye may have life.' I have been a little way with our Lord through the vineyard, John xv. Oh, when the blessed Husbandman takes up his knife, it sometimes cuts keenly, and makes us feel and cry out. This, I know, it is not joyous but grievous, yet it doth yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness; and the result is, he bringeth more fruit unto God.

"Sunday.—Awoke at half-past twelve.—A great fire in Kent-street. I feel thankful that I am preserved. Arose early, and feel myself well, but weak. I feel the necessity of abiding in Christ by repeated acts of faith. I do find that when I depart from Christ, though it be but partially, or when I neglect any duty, I get into a poor, withered, fruitless condition. Pray, pray, pray for

"Your most affectionate father,

"THOS. CRANFIELD."

Although Mr. Cranfield appeared generally in a ruly spiritual frame of mind, yet it is certain that *he had great and frequent conflicts* with the prince of darkness. He appeared, during the whole of life, to be an especial mark at which that enemy of souls shot his fiery darts. No doubt, the natural disposition of Mr. C. (being a man of remarkably strong feelings) invited his foe to the attack. What the precise nature of those con-

Acts was, is not exactly certain, as he generally appeared to manifest an aversion to talk on the subject; but it is evident they were very severe. He has sometimes declared to his family, that he had experienced struggles quite as desperate as that described in the "Pilgrim's Progress" between Christian and Apollyon. He has also said, that while worshipping God in His house, he has been frequently tempted to curse and to swear in the midst of the congregation.

But these struggles, though violent, were but short; being well armed with the sword of the Spirit, and having a wonderful address in the use of it, he came off more than conqueror, through the strength and assistance of the Captain of his salvation. These conflicts, however, were not unattended with blessings, as they led him to watch and to pray, to abide more beneath the shadow of the Almighty, and to depend more upon him for strength to help in time of need.

It might be said of Mr. Cranfield, as it was of Apollos, that *he was mighty in the Scriptures*. There was no part of the word of God with which he did not appear to be acquainted; and although, in the latter part of his life, his memory commonly failed him upon other subjects, yet, when asked to prove any doctrine of the gospel, he could repeat texts one after another, giving chapter and verse for each, almost as correctly as if he quoted from a Concordance. In social parties he showed great readiness in applying his knowledge of Scripture. A gentleman, one evening, having discoursed very long and learnedly upon the sinfulness of calling our fellow-creatures hypocrites, concluded by saying, that there was no

instance in the whole word of God of any righteous person calling any man a hypocrite. To which Mr. C. replied, with a good-humoured smile, and without a moment's hesitation, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." At another time, being told that there was neither precedent nor command in the Bible for giving thanks *after* meat, he immediately quoted Deut. viii. 10, "When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God, and the good land which he hath given thee." The Holy Scriptures, indeed, were his continual study. Few persons entered his room without finding the Bible before him; and if in the night he could get no sleep, he would frequently light a candle, and read and pray for hours together. In the day-time he seldom read without pen, ink, and paper by his side, for the purpose of noting down any thing that might strike his attention. The sayings of Christ, as recorded in the four Gospels, were always remarkably precious to his soul. He used to say, that there was a power and fulness in them, such as he could find nowhere else. At one time, when confined to his home by indisposition, he marked in his Bible, with a pen, under every word uttered by our Saviour that is recorded; and at another time, he copied them out with his own hand.

He was accustomed to read his Bible quite through, and always with some particular design—sometimes to discover for himself, when, and under what circumstances, the promise of the Messiah was given; at another time, to find if God revealed himself to his people in any other than a relative character; and in the year that closed his life, he studied it with a view to direct

all its promises, and threatenings, personally to himself. This he found to be a truly profitable employment, and his mind became exceedingly enriched thereby. The following is a letter he wrote to his daughter while engaged in this work :—

“ 8th October, 1838.

“ MY DEAR MARTHA,

‘ Here we suffer grief and pain.’

“ I am going through the fire, but am wonderfully supported. Things in the family are as they should be, in reference to God’s dealings in afflictive dispensations. Afflictions flow from the heart of God, therefore they are not to be despised. They are proofs of our sonship, so they are profitable; they promote fellowship and communion with God. They are profitable, when we look not at the things that are seen. When faith is in exercise, she looks beyond the cloud. Faith has to do with unseen things. What is the world, with all its enjoyments, in comparison with fellowship with God!—O ye sons of wealth and ease, I envy you not; I possess all; my estate is vast, beyond limits; I have more than Adam lost; I have Christ, with all the perfection of Deity, made over to me in a covenant sealed by the blood of Christ, witnessed by the Holy Spirit to my soul. See the Judge’s handwriting—‘ Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more.’ I have also the hand of my God, in writing—that he will carry me through old age; therefore I fear not. I have laid all my concerns, with my children and their little ones, upon the shoulders of Christ. Now, hear what my covenant God says: ‘ Harken unto

me,' (dear Lord! close my ears to all without and within,) 'hearken unto me, O house of Thomas Cranfield: even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.'

"Here is a cordial for an old man; and here I am, a witness for God, that he is faithful to his engagement. May the Lord bless you; and when it is well with you, remember

"Your affectionate father,

THOS. CRANFIELD."

"P. S.—Oh dear! my head is bad; I am ashamed of this note. Well, it may be my last. I feel the old man: I would shake him off, but I cannot; and my Father says, that my strength is to sit still. Faith says it is best for me: then, as I need it, I must go out of myself for support."

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CHAPTER XI.

THE CHARACTER OF MR. CRANFIELD, AS A SUNDAY-SCHOOL
TEACHER AND VISITOR OF THE AFFLICTED.

WHATEVER view we take of the character of Mr. Cranfield, we find in it something interesting and striking; but as a Sunday-school teacher, and visiter of the poor and afflicted, no man, perhaps, was more extensively useful, and signally successful.

As the superintendent of a Sabbath-school, Mr. C. appeared to possess a considerable defect: there was a want of order in his arrangements, and a too frequent change in his plans. His fellow-labourers, as they held him in high and deserved esteem, seemed ready enough to fall in with his proposals; but they could scarcely pursue so fast as he advanced before them. As a teacher, however, he was undoubtedly one of the most eminent, indefatigable, zealous, and useful of any that have appeared since the formation of Sunday-schools.

In all his engagements at the school, punctuality was strictly observed by him; this he considered an indispensable qualification for a teacher. Nothing appeared to ruffle him more than to see the teachers come in half an-hour after the time for

opening the school. Such persons he would sometimes accost on their entrance as perfect strangers, and very gravely ask them if they were teachers, or what was their business there? During the whole period of his labours, he was never known to absent himself from the school on account of the weather: nothing but indisposition was considered by him a sufficient excuse for such neglect of duty.

In the class, he was kind, serious, and interesting; and in the desk, solemn, persuasive, and energetic. In his addresses to the children, the energy of his spirit and of his utterance was such as is seldom exceeded in Sabbath-schools. He would give such scope to his feelings, as to stamp loudly with his foot; and would often be so overcome, that it was with difficulty he could proceed. Frequently, both teachers and children were excited to tears, by his pathetic representations of the love of the Saviour, and his readiness to receive sinners. He spoke with authority, as one delivering a message from God; and his language, though not always in perfect accordance with the rules laid down by grammarians, was in strict accordance with the truth.

The methods he sometimes used, for the purpose of fixing the attention of the children, and impressing their minds, were striking, and often productive of the most happy results. One day, after energetically urging his youthful hearers to flee from the wrath to come, he exclaimed, "Children, do you know whither you are going? Did you ever in your life, for a moment, think whether you are going to heaven or hell? If not, think of it now. Do not delay: time is precious, and the

next moment may hurry you into an eternal world. Oh! do examine yourselves: let each one ask himself, and herself, Am I going to heaven, or hell?" and then taking out his watch, he laid it on the desk, and said, "Come, I will give you three minutes to think of the matter." The children, during this time, remained in the most profound silence; and there is no doubt, that many seriously considered the question. At other times, he would quote passages of Scripture, and direct them personally to the children by name, in this manner—"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth! and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know Thou, Thomas Jones—know thou, Mary Smith—know thou, William Farrell, (pointing to each,) that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." The children by these means were often much affected, and even the teachers have declared, that so powerful has been the impression made upon their minds, that the remembrance of many of his expressions would never be forgotten.

The success of Mr. Cranfield's labours was extraordinary. Several instances of usefulness have already been recorded; besides these, there are many others, the details of which were, from time to time, transmitted to the committee of the Southwark Society; they are preserved in a book, kept for that purpose, with many other documents of a similar kind which have been furnished by the various schools connected with that institution. In the latter part of his life, it may be said, without exaggeration, that scarcely a week elapsed

without his being met in his walks by one or more of his old scholars, who thanked him for his attention, and told him, that the Lord had met with them in the way of mercy through his instrumentality.

The great secret of his success appears to have been his love of prayer, his faith in the promises of God, and his entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit in all his efforts. Like Elisha, when he raised to life the son of the Shunamite, he commenced the work with secret prayer, and then, while careful to contract himself, as it were, within the narrow limits of the children's understanding, he stretched his powers to the utmost, as an instrument, to warm their hearts with a Saviour's love, and to raise them from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. He knew, indeed, that it was not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of God, that sinners were to be converted; that doctrine was ever prominent in all his discourses; but he was also aware that God worked by means, and that an *icicle* was a most unlikely instrument to enkindle a *flame*.

In all his instructions to the children, he had an eye to the parents, and seldom finished his addresses without repeating some short sentiment or striking anecdote, which the scholars were requested to carry home.

Much of his time was also occupied at home, in composing catechisms upon various subjects, both for the instruction of the children and the use of the teachers. These catechisms alone are so numerous, and some of them of such extreme length, as might induce the supposition that the

whole of his leisure time had been employed in writing them.

It was the plan of Mr. Cranfield, if it could be avoided, never to lose sight of the children that had been instructed in the school. He followed them, as far as he was able, to the stations they occupied in the world, inquiring into their conduct, and exhorting them to continue in the things they had learned. He was constantly writing to some of them to know the state of their minds, and to ascertain if they were travelling to Zion with their faces thitherward, and many letters of an interesting character still remain, that he received from his former scholars, in answer to his inquiries. The following is a specimen :—

“24th May, 1812.

“DEAR SIR,

“I return you many thanks for your kind letter. Believe me, I think it a great privilege that such an unworthy creature as I am should have such a friend to watch over me. I must tell you, it seems hard work for me sometimes to ascend the mountain, being burdened with guilt and the cursed sin of unbelief. Oh, these are weights that drag me down ! but when the Lord comes, and lifts upon me the light of his countenance, and takes off the load, then it is I ascend with speed. O sir, I thank you for reminding me of the carefulness it needs, to descend from the mountain to worldly concerns. Indeed, sir, I find it so ; and I have need to say—

‘ When any turn from Zion’s way—

Alas, what numbers do !—

Methinks I hear my Saviour say,

Wilt thou forsake me too ?

‘ Ah, Lord, with such a heart as mine,
Unless thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like them at last.’

“ I sometimes am saying, ‘ I shall surely perish one day by the hand of Saul.’ What with the world, the flesh, the devil, and my own wicked heart, (for that is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,) I should certainly fall, if the Lord did not hold me. ‘ It is of the Lord’s mercies that I am not consumed : because his compassions fail not.’ Oh, the forbearance of God ! When I take a view of it, I am ‘ lost in wonder love and praise.’

“ I thank you, sir, for warning me of that lurking serpent, while holding communion with God. Indeed, I often find the tempter near, while enjoying the means of grace. Oh, there needs much watching, much prayer, and a continual looking up to Christ for strength. We find Peter, not many hours before he denied his Master, receiving the Lord’s supper. What need, then, have I to watch and pray, lest I should fall into the same temptation. I have been reading to-day in Job, and have been thinking that when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, no doubt they had a delightful season, and enjoyed sweet communion with him ; but we find that Satan also came with them, no doubt to disturb their pleasures and mar their joys. May the Lord keep me upon my watch tower.

“ I went this morning to Camomile-street, and there got a little food. The text was, ‘ But the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of

life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.' Oh that I may be of the nappy number who are thus bound up in the bundle of life, and have their names written in heaven! I can remember, that you and other dear teachers have often put up that prayer for me. May your prayers be answered, and may the Lord quicken me by his Holy Spirit, so that I may live nearer to him; may lie low at the foot of his cross; be stripped of every thing that belongs to self, and have my dependence placed alone on Christ. I shall esteem it a favour if you would let me have another letter, and give me your thoughts upon that passage—'I will allure her into the wilderness.' I long to come and see you, but do not know when I shall be able. May the Lord bless you and your family. Amen.

"I remain, yours truly."

In writing to the old scholars, his language was always calculated to affect their hearts; and they who refused to believe, were often compelled to tremble. To the old scholars whom he knew to be living in sin, he was generally very severe. He well knew the gall and bitterness of a state of bondage to the powers of darkness, for it had been his own; and he hated sin so universally in all its forms, that his declarations against it were both pointed and searching. The following letter, to one of the old scholars of the Mint school who was then smarting under the rod, without listening to the voice of Him that had appointed it, will show his peculiar style of writing, as well as his unremitted attention to the spiritual wel-

fare of those who had been placed under his instructions :—

“MY DEAR JAMES,

“I have been contrasting your trials with those of your brother Robert, and have beheld the workings of both—I mean God-ward; and I see a great difference. The one, an example of patience, submission, and faith in the all-disposing hand of a covenant God; saying, ‘Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:’—what then?—‘yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.’ ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’ Well done, Robert, my boy. Bravo! victory! victory! Herein is the truth made manifest, of which St. Paul speaks: ‘For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ This is the consolation of the Christian under all his trials. Blessed be his name, this has been my support all my days, in my journey heavenward. Here I see the house of the righteous blessed—God blessing the labour of his hands; his children around his table like olive-plants, pleasant and green; tending to fruitfulness—the altar of God set up in the house; the presence of Jehovah experienced; the blood of sprinkling on the door-post—all safe—the Lamb

of God fed on day by day ; life derived therefrom though seasoned with bitter herbs ; and the waters of Marah to drink, sweetened with the branch cut down. Oh, blessed waters, thus sweetened with the Man whose name is the Branch ! Well may St. Paul say, with a cross on his back, ‘Thanks be unto God.’ Here is the Christian, deriving from the bitter waters refreshment and encouragement to go on his journey through life, though it may be with much difficulty ; being comforted with the promise of God—‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.’ May my soul be as a watered garden, whose springs fail not ! James, do I hear you say, ‘Amen,’ for yourself ? Oh, if I could but believe it to be the breathing of your soul from a view of your barren state, my heart would rejoice, my hope revive ; it would be life from the dead—health, strength, and refreshment to my mind ; but, alas ! alas ! my joy is turned into sorrow. Ah, Lord, thou hast made desolate. Oh, James, the adversary and the enemy has entered into the gates of thy house ! I see God sharpening his eyes upon your house with anger. May it break your heart !

“I see nothing cheering about you—no repentance—a complete desolation. ‘I will take vengeance,’ saith Jehovah ; ‘I will not meet thee as a man.’ Isa. xliii. 3. As much as if he had said, I will not show so much as the least human pity or compassion, much less Divine support. I will meet thee as a bear bereaved of her whelps ; for, ‘I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah ;’—(mark !)—‘I will tear, and go away ; I will take away, and none shall rescue him.’ Your house is full of enemies

do you wish to know their names?—I will tell you, and they are worse than the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Romans: there is Achar, Doeg, Gehazi, Ziba, and others, which I forbear to mention. These enemies are gaping lions. Oh, what terror and destruction have they made—torn you from all enjoyment, and separated you from God, who is peace! You are hedged in with thorns and briers—your course is stopped; there appears no way of escaping—no Zoar to flee to. How often have you sought and rested in means, to save yourself! but the remedy has only served to embitter your condition. Oh, James, James, I am grieved at my heart! not at your troubles—these concern me the least; but I see you set on fire round about; the fire is burning you, and yet you lay it not to heart. I mean, that you are not sufficiently awakened to search out the accursed thing. Arise! arise up quickly! lest God should say, ‘Pray not for them: though Job, Daniel, and Moses shall stand before me, yet my mind could not be toward them.’ Ah, James, I fear while I write, yes—I write and tremble, because of his righteous judgments. But do I hear you say—

‘Is there no hope, and must I die?
Is there no friend nor helper nigh?’

If so, I rejoice to inform you that there is a Friend—Jesus—that dearest of all names; the great burden-bearer; he bore our sins and our punishment in his own body upon the tree. He still calls upon you to return to him—‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:’—(mark!)—‘if *any* man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come to

him, and I will sup with him, and he with me.' Jesus condescends not only to call to you, but he comes to you; he comes to your door, and there knocks. He might have sent you one of his officers, as he did to Ananias and Sapphira, and seize you as a rebel; but instead of that, he comes to your door, and there knocks, and begs that you would receive him into your house as a friend: he not only knocks at your door, but he stands (oh blessed attitude!) waiting: not only so, but he makes a promise of what he will do for you, if you will admit him—he will admit you to great honours and privileges; he will sup with you, and you with him. Read Rev. xxii. 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely.' Oh, how does Christ here set before you his own excellency! and how does he condescend to grant you not only his own invitation, but that also of the Spirit and the bride, if by any means he might encourage you to come! Oh, my dear friend, then come, and take of the water of life freely! My soul melts at the invitation: I know not how you feel. In this frame of mind I am now going on my feeble knees for you.

‘ Your affectionate friend,

“ THOS. CRANFIELD.”

These letters were sure to be followed by a visit, when another reproof would be received from him in person. The fear of the Lord had raised him above the fear of man; and he thought it his duty to be equally zealous and bold in ex-

consulting with his guilty scholars, wherever he met them.

He was always careful that none of the children should go out into the world without a Bible. If they had none of their own, they were furnished with one either out of the teachers' fund, or at his own expense; and generally with some remarks, in his own handwriting, on the cover or fly-leaf. The following lines were written in a Bible presented to a little girl:—

“This book of books is presented to you from a friendly regard for your spiritual welfare. It is one of the most eminent means of converting the soul. This book is well adapted, by the Spirit of God, to teach men solid wisdom in things pertaining to himself and godliness. ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ My dear young friend, let me exhort you to seek a saving knowledge of God in Christ forthwith; for, compared with this, all other knowledge is vain and useless. Next to this, I would that you honour your mother, gladly receive her instruction, and earnestly practise it, in order to promote the fear of God in your mind. See that, with utmost circumspection and eagerness, you avoid all unnecessary fellowship with the wicked. Oh, do not listen to their flattering inducements; for, if they once entangle you, they will perpetually hurry you on from one horrid course to another. How necessary, then, that you should make this book the man of your counsel! It is with earnest prayer I present it to you.

“THOMAS CRANFIELD.”

“4th July, 1826.”

In visiting and comforting the sick and afflicted Mr. Cranfield was as active and successful as in his endeavours to feed the lambs of Christ's flock. The number of persons whose spiritual eyes he has been the means of opening, through these seasonable visits, is surprising; and yet our wonder ceases when we consider the means he employed for the purpose. His first care was to see if they were in possession of a Bible; and if they could not read, he would either go every day, or perhaps twice or thrice a day, himself, or send some other person, to read to them. He then presented their case before the throne of the Divine Majesty, and would spend hours in prayer on their behalf. His visits were always continued till either the affliction was in some measure removed, or the sufferer died. In the latter case, an account of the individual's death was written and sent to some friend. Sometimes his son, who frequently attended with him to the house of mourning, assisted in drawing up these accounts; at other times they were written without any assistance, and addressed in a letter to his own children, to excite them to acts of benevolence and mercy.

The following is an extract of one addressed to his son:—

“ 13th July, 1831.

“ MY DEAR BOY,

“ One of my neighbours called upon me to visit a poor man in Little Lant-street, named Jones. His apartment was miserable to an extreme. There were four children, half-naked—the mother out—the poor man in bed, such as it was, groaning with pain. After the usual questions about his disorder.

I inquired respecting the state of his mind. I found him very ignorant; he could not read. I spoke to him on the death of the soul; and on seeing a Bible near his bed, I took it up to read some portion to him; but, to my disappointment, I found it to be a Welsh translation. Not having my Bible with me, I looked round again, and saw a tract, which furnished me with matter for conversation. After this, I called again, and found him anxious about his soul. I cannot relate all that passed; but I give you some of his answers to the questions, which you will perceive I put to him. 'I feel now that I am a sinner—I have lived a bad life—never attended church: but, sir, is there mercy for me?' Here he wept. 'I believe the Bible to be true; if God has no mercy for me, I must perish: my mind is in a state of confusion; I feel I cannot believe—Oh that God would give me faith and repentance!' He wept again. 'O sir, I feel the truth of what you said to me yesterday about sin and sinners; I have no hope; I have no good works; if I am saved, it must be alone through the sufferings of Christ. Oh! it is enough to break a heart of stone, to hear you speak of the sufferings of Christ.' He here wept so much as to be unable to speak for some time. At another time he said, 'The concerns of my soul are uppermost in my thoughts, night and day.' On my last visit, I was astonished to find him alive. He began, the moment I saw him, to talk about the Saviour's love; he seemed to forget his bodily affliction, in the enjoyment he had of Christ's presence with him while passing through the dark valley. In this state of mind he continued till his happy spirit took its flight. I looked

after him, and longed to follow in his track to the realms of celestial light—

‘ There I shall see, and hear, and know,
All I desire or wish below ;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.’

“I was reading this morning at five o’clock to your mother, these words, ‘We shall see Him as he is, and shall be like Him.’ Well may John say, ‘He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.’ I do feel, and verily believe, that a hope of heaven, grounded on the death of Christ, is of a transforming nature; it eclipses the world; it endures trials; it brings the mind to submit to the will of God, and enables the believer to triumph over death. It puts life into a withered old man, so that, though loaded with infirmities he can leap as a hart.”

Perhaps few persons were better adapted for visiting the poor and afflicted than Mr. Cranfield. Having passed through almost every variety of suffering himself, he could enter into the feelings of others, and, like an experienced physician, knew exactly what remedies to administer, and where to apply them. But to no class of persons was he more eminently useful than to those who, having been convinced of sin, were led by Satan to believe that their crimes were of too great a magnitude to be pardoned. To such persons he would open such a catalogue of offences that he himself had committed, and from which the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed him, that every mouth became stopped, and multitudes who had

been saying, "He will be favourable no more, his mercy is clean gone for ever," have, from the detail of his experience, been encouraged to hope in the Lord, and have eventually experienced the truth of the psalmist's declaration, "There is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared." In the sick-chambers, therefore, of poor unfortunate females, he was generally a physician of value; and as his age and character placed him above suspicion, he scrupled not to go into these very worst abodes of infamy, disease, and wretchedness. It will not be known till the morning of the resurrection, what benefits have resulted from his labours among this class of persons: one instance only must here suffice.

About the year 1815, he was sent for, in great haste, to visit an unhappy female who had attempted to commit suicide, and whose life was despaired of. In the messenger, who came with the hasty summons, he recognised an old scholar of the Mint school, but her appearance was so much altered, that it was with difficulty he remembered her features. The hue of health had departed from her cheeks; her eyes had ceased to sparkle with their former lustre, and her general appearance but too plainly indicated the class of characters with which she was associated. He went with her to the house of mourning, and was assiduous in his efforts for the good both of her and her companion. The one was raised again from what was thought to be her dying-bed, but returned to her former vicious course. The other, however, exhibited tokens of true penitence and deep contrition, and was reclaimed from the paths of infamy and sorrow and, by the blessing of

God on the endeavours of her teacher and friend she "was delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son." Mr. C. raised a small weekly subscription for her, and procured her a little needle-work, by which she was enabled to live in comfort the rest of her days. But the seeds of a fatal disorder, which it was impossible for medical skill to eradicate, had been produced in her delicate frame, in consequence of her former irregularities and exposure to the night air. Her health gradually wasted away, and, after two years of the most consistent walk and conversation, she was released from pain and suffering, and, no doubt, was admitted into that heavenly Jerusalem, "where the inhabitants shall no more say they are sick, and the people that dwell therein are forgiven their iniquities." Mr. C. watched over her, till her death, with parental affection; and the expressions of gratitude which fell from her lips were truly delightful and encouraging. "The blessing of one that was ready to perish came upon him."

But believers in Christ were the objects of his peculiar regard. For them he spent much time, both at the throne of grace and at the writing-table. His letters to mourners in Zion would fill a large and interesting volume, but the limits of this work forbid the insertion of more than two.

The following is to a friend suffering under long affliction :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

'I feel much concerned about you—bearing up, as it were, against wind and tide, being ex-

ceedingly tossed with the tempest, the mind perplexed, the enemy assaulting you with cares of the body, and asking you how you shall get through. Thus the tempest beats hard on your poor shattered bark, so as almost to cause you to murmur: for this cause I cease not to pray for you, that you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, strengthened with *all might* according to his glorious power, unto *all patience*, and *long-suffering with joyfulness*. What can you desire more than to be strengthened with *all might*, by him who is *Almighty*? Can any thing sink you while the everlasting arms are underneath? Oh! no.—Power is a perfection in the Divine nature, and stands engaged to support his people: that same glorious power which has been displayed in the creation of men and angels, of heaven and earth, is the rock and stay of his people, and is sufficient to bear you up under every affliction, with (mark!) *patience*. Without this strength, the heart even of the stoutest Christian would be in a state of perpetual murmuring against Heaven.

“By reason of the length and weight of your affliction abiding on you, I perceive you begin to be weary. You are striving in your own strength to bear your affliction, saying, ‘How am I to be carried through to my journey’s end, looking at things temporal; and while thus looking, the tempest increaseth, faith is weakened, and your fears increased. Thus a high-road is made for the devil to assault you with his fiery darts of distrust in God, and of your interest in the Saviour.

“My dear friend, God never gives his people

faith, or any other grace, but he tries it. When your faith is weak, and the affliction heavy, it becomes you and me, as Christians, (through Divine help,) to fetch comfort, strength, and contentment from the covenant of grace, which is well-ordered in all things, and sure. This was David's sweet succour, when ail outward comfort seemed by the hand of Providence to be cut off, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Herein you have a treasure of strength, fountains of supply, and springs of consolation. As all the perfections of the Divine nature stand engaged to support you under your afflictions, to strengthen your faith, and afford you every necessary comfort; and whilst you see the oath, power, and promise of Jehovah engaged for you, can your soul sink through outward distress, or faint for want of faith? When God saith, Isa. xli. 10, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness:' and again, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou passest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' This is the truth of God, and you are bound to believe it, and to take comfort therefrom.

"I now leave you in the hands of God: none but He can fulfil my heart's desire concerning you.

O God, in thee do I trust! let me never be put to confusion.' May it be your prayer!

"Sabbath morning, six o'clock, August 26."

The following letter to his son, at the Margate

Infirmity, affords an admirable specimen of his ability in comforting those that mourn :—

“ MY VERY DEAR RICHARD,

“ I received your kind letter, and thank you for your remembrance of me. My soul yearns over you, and am saying inwardly, ‘ By what shall I comfort you?’—‘ Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. I view you as an exile longing to be loosened, crying, ‘ Woe is me, that I dwell in Mesech, among the ungodly.’

“ These words have occurred to my mind, and they seem to be directed to you :—‘ Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans, for *their good*.’ I have been looking who these figs were that were thus carried away captive; and I find Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Mordecai, among the number. They were, like Jeremiah in the low dungeon, surrounded with a wall of hewn stone, and gall and wormwood were their portion. Yet in this state, God tells them not to fear. Early sufferings sometimes prove best, as in their case. Read Jer. lii. 31. Mark—God owns their suffering to be his doing. Your state is ordered by a wise counsel; for, ‘ My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.’ The counsels of the Lord are deep; the result of unerring wisdom. The matter, means, and end are all therein connected. Oh, that God should consult our welfare! He is ‘ wise in all his ways, and noly in all his works.’ God promises to own them in captivity: so he

does.—All his, in whatever condition they may be, he promises to support them, and deliver them. You have a skilful Pilot at the helm. ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ You know that Jeremiah, who was an old friend of mine, says, ‘If you have run with the footmen and they weary thee, how shall you contend with horsemen?’ Remember, God’s thoughts are thoughts of peace, to give you an expected end. I know your state is rather galling; but I see there is much mixture of mercy. It affords me great pleasure to hear that you are so usefully employed in distributing tracts. Who knows but that the Lord has sent you to Margate, to be the means of the salvation of some poor sinner? This will make up for all your pain and sorrow. I see by your letter that you are learning the songs of Zion, though in a strange land. I find you two or three forms higher than when you left home. Go on, and you will experience your dwelling to be on high, and your place of defence will be the munition of rocks. I am upon my watch-tower for you three times a day, and I am commanded to have faith in God.—‘I know in whom I have believed.’

“The best remedy I can find for trials is patience; so let patience have her perfect work. Cheerfully submit to the hands of God, and say, ‘The cup which my heavenly Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?’ Look at Micah vii. 9, ‘I will bear the indignation of the Lord.’ When thus resigned, affliction will cease to be affliction, because it has produced the end designed by it.

“O my dear boy, I know what I am writing: I

am not a novice in the school of Christ. Then you will learn that beautiful lesson of the apostle—‘In whatsoever state you are placed, therewith to be content;’ in the comfortable persuasion that all things shall work together for your good. Endeavour to study the mind of God in this trial by his word. I remember it is said of Luther, that he could not understand some psalms till he was afflicted. Christ’s cross is no letter in the book, ‘and yet,’ says he, ‘it has taught me more than all the letters in the book.’ Oh, yes, affliction is a golden key, by which the Lord opens the rich treasures of his word to his people; and I think you will have to acknowledge it before you get off your couch—this I have experienced. Samson, when he found honey, gave some to his father and mother to eat. I truly can say, that I have found honey in my affliction, and would give some to you to sweeten the gall of your troubles. I would be telling you the wonders of God’s grace, the faithfulness of his promises, and the riches of his mercy to my soul. Gracious experience ought to be communicated; and remember, that affliction is not only for our own use, but for others also. Read Heb. xi. 4. The benefit of this affliction may be handed down to your grandchildren, as I trust you have derived profit from those of your grandfather. ‘The father to the children shall make known thy truth.’ It is the duty of parents to aim at inspiring their children with a confidence in the truth of God. Come closer, and throw yourself into the arms of your heavenly Father, and you will be safe—‘while you look not to the things that are seen.’ Your safety consists in standing still: be quiet; God will perfect that

which concerns you, and do all for you which your case requires. I wish you to read the last verse in Micah, and see with what solemnity the covenant of grace is ratified to you, and with what satisfaction it may be relied on by you. The Lord will perform his truth and mercy: not one jot or tittle of it shall fail. 'Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.' Oh, let us my dear boy, rejoice in and praise the pardoning mercy of our family God. Amen.

"I remain your affectionate father,

"THOS. CRANFIELD.

"Sept. 6th, 1838."

In closing the memoir of this useful and devoted man, it will be only necessary to add, that it has not been attempted here to draw a perfect character. Mr. Cranfield had his failings, like other men; but no one understood them better than he did, nor could any one be more ready than he was to condemn himself. It is sufficient to observe, that "Watch and pray" was his motto; and that his life was a practical commentary upon the words of the apostle, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: least that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." 1 Cor. ix. 27.

May the surviving members of the bereaved family, and those who were the companions and fellow-labourers of this eminently favoured disciple of Jesus—of whose useful and protracted career a plain and faithful account has been thus attempted—together with all that shall peruse this narrative, "be followers of him who, through faith and patience, now inherits the

promises," and, like him, "receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, and reign in life by Jesus Christ."—To whom be glory for ever! Amen.

THE END.

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